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THE

WORKS

OF THE

REV. JOHN NEWTON,

LATE RECTOR OF THE UNITED PARISHES OF ST. MARY WOOLNOTH,
AND
ST. MARY WOOLCHURCH HAW, LONDON:

WITH

MEMOIRS OF THE AUTHOR,

AND GENERAL REMARKS ON HIS LIFE, CONNECTIONS,
AND CHARACTER;

BY THE

REV. RICHARD CECIL, M.A.

THIRD EDITION.

IN SIX VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR HAMILTON, ADAMS, AND CO.,
33, PATERNOSTER ROW.

M.DCCC.XXIV.

LENOX LIBRARY
NEW YORK

Dennett, Printer, Leather Lane, London.

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A

REVIEW

OF

ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY,

SO FAR AS IT CONCERNS THE

PROGRESS, DECLENSIONS, AND REVIVALS

OF

EVANGELICAL DOCTRINE AND PRACTICE:

WITH

A BRIEF ACCOUNT

OF THE

SPIRIT AND METHODS BY WHICH VITAL AND EXPERIMENTAL RELIGION HAVE BEEN OPPOSED,

IN ALL AGES OF THE CHURCH.

———— Aliusque et Idem,
Nasceris ————

But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now. GAL. iv. 29.

INTRODUCTION.

THOUGH the actions of mankind appear greatly diversified from the influence of particular circumstances, human nature has been always the same. The history of all ages and countries uniformly confirms the scriptural doctrine, that man is a depraved and fallen creature, and that some selfish temper, ambition, avarice, pride, revenge, and the like, are, in effect, the main springs and motives of his conduct, unless so far, and in such instances, as they are corrected and subdued by Divine Grace.

Therefore, when St. Paul speaks of the most dreadful degree of impiety that can be imagined, *enmity against God*, he does not consider it as the fault of the particular time in which he lived, or impute it singly either to the idolatrous Heathens or the obstinate Jews, but he affirms universally, that *the carnal mind* (το φρονημα της σαρκος), the wisdom, the most spiritual and discerning faculty of man, is enmity against God. Men differ considerably in capacity, rank, education, and attainments; they jar in sentiments and interests; they mutually revile, hate, and destroy one another; but in this point they all agree. Whether Greeks or Barbarians, wise or ignorant, bond or free, the bent and disposition of their minds, while unrenewed by grace, is black and implacable enmity against the blessed God.

To those who acknowledge the authority of Scripture, St. Paul's express assertion should be sufficient proof of this point, if we could produce no other; but, besides

the many other passages in the book of God to the same effect, it may be demonstrated by the most obvious proofs, experience, and matter of fact. The history of the Old Testament from the death of Abel, the nature and grounds of the opposition which Jesus and his apostles met with, and the treatment of the most exemplary Christians that have lived in succeeding ages, are indisputable evidences of this offensive truth; for what can be stronger marks of enmity against God than to despise his word, to scorn his favour, to oppose his will, to caress his enemies, and to insult and abuse his servants, for no other offence than their attachment to his service?

But when, from these premises, the Apostle infers, "So "then they that are in the flesh cannot please God," though the consequence is evident, it may seem at first view unnecessary; for can it be supposed that the carnal mind, which breathes a spirit of defiance and enmity against God, will have any desire or thought of pleasing him? Yet thus it is.—The carnal mind is not only desperately wicked, but deeply deceitful; it deceives others, and often it deceives itself. As the magicians of Egypt, though enemies to Moses, attempted to counterfeit his miracles, and as Balaam could say, "The Lord my God!" though he was wickedly engaged against the Lord's people; so it has been usual with many who have hated and denied the power of godliness, to value themselves highly upon the form of it; and, while they are alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, they affect to be thought his best servants, and make the most confident claims to his favour.

The pure religion of Jesus cannot but be despised and rejected by the carnal mind: "the natural man receiveth "not the things of God," they are beyond his sphere, he

does not apprehend them, and therefore cannot approve them; nay, he is averse and unwilling to meddle with them, and therefore it is impossible he should understand them. But the fiercest opposition arises from the complication of presumption and hypocrisy we have spoken of; when men, destitute of the Spirit of God, from a vain conceit of their own wisdom and goodness, arrogate to themselves an authoritative decision in religious concerns, and would reduce the judgement and practice of others to their own corrupt standard.

Such was eminently the character of the Scribes and Pharisees, who, with unwearied malice, persecuted our Lord to the death of the cross; and he forewarned his disciples to expect the like treatment; he sent them forth as lambs in the midst of wolves, and assured them that their attachment to him would draw on them the hatred of mankind, so far as even to deprive them of the rights of civil society, and the pleasures of relative life. "A "man's foes shall be those of his own household;" his parents shall forget their affection, his children their duty, his servants their reverence, even the wife of his bosom shall despise him, when he boldly professes the Gospel; nay, the most amiable qualities, joined to the most endearing connexions, are not sufficient wholly to suppress the enmity which fills the hearts of the unregenerate, against those in whom they discern the image of Christ: and that this enmity would sometimes assume a religious form, and under that appearance proceed to the greatest extremities, he informed them in another place, "The "time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that "he doth God service."

If a faith and practice agreeable to the New Testament were not always attended with a measure of this oppo-

sition, we should want one considerable evidence that the Gospel is true, and infidels would be possessed of one solid objection against it, namely, That our Lord was mistaken, when he predicted the reception his doctrine would meet with. But the Scriptures cannot be broken: the word of Christ is fulfilled and fulfilling every day, and especially in this particular. Many perhaps will be ready to object here, and to maintain, that in our nation, and at this present time, the charge is invidious and false. It will be pleaded, that when Christianity had to struggle with Jews and Pagans, it could not but be opposed; but that with us, under the guard of a national establishment, an opposition to Christianity (unless by the feeble efforts of deists and libertines) is impracticable and inconsistent by the very terms; and that, if the delusions of a few visionary enthusiasts are treated with that contempt and indignation which they justly deserve, this should not be styled an opposition to Christianity, but rather a warrantable concern for its vindication, especially as no coercive methods are used; for though some attempts have been made to restrain the leaders from poisoning the minds of the people, yet no person is injured, either in life or property, on account of his opinions, how extravagant soever.

To this extenuation it may be replied—

1. I do not assert that persecution and reproach must necessarily attend the *name* of a Christian, or that it is not possible to make a high profession of religion under that name, and at the same time preserve or acquire a large share of the honours, riches, and friendship of the world; but I maintain with the Apostle, "All that will live godly "in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." The distinction he makes in these words is observable: So much godliness

as may be professed without a peculiar relation to Jesus, the world will bear; sobriety and benevolence they will applaud; even prayers, fastings, and other external acts may be commended; but to live godly in Christ Jesus—so as to profess our whole dependence upon his free salvation, to seek all our strength from his grace, to do all expressly for his sake, and then to renounce all trust or confidence in what we have done, and to make mention of his righteousness only—this the world cannot bear; this will surely provoke the contempt or hatred of all who have not the same spirit, whether accounted Christians or Infidels, Papists or Protestants. That nothing less than what I have mentioned can be the import of living godly in Christ Jesus, I shall in due time prove by a cloud of witnesses.

2. I acknowledge, with thankfulness to God, and to those whom he has placed in just authority over us, that the interposition of stripes, imprisonment, tortures, and death, in matters pertaining to conscience, has no longer place in our happy land:

——— jacet (semperque jaceat!)
Divini Imago Zelis et Pestis.

The spirit of persecution is repressed by the wisdom of our laws and the clemency of our princes; but we have no ground to believe it is extinct, or rather, we have sufficient evidence of the contrary. Not to mention some recent instances, in which power has been strained to its full extent, it is notorious that scorn, invective, and calumny, (which can act unrestrained by human laws,) are employed for the same ends and purposes, which, in other countries, are more speedily effected by anathemas and sanguinary edicts.

3. The opposition I am speaking of is not primarily between men and men, simply considered, but between

the spirit of the world and the spirit that is of God, and therefore the manifestation of each will be in mutual proportion. The Lord Jesus himself sustained the fiercest contradiction of sinners, because his character was superlatively excellent: his apostles, though far inferior to their Lord, expressed so much of his temper and conduct, that they were counted worthy to suffer shame in the next degree to him: as he was, so were they in the world. St. Paul, who laboured more abundantly than his brethren, experienced a larger share of dishonour and ill-treatment. Though educated at the feet of Gamaliel, and no stranger to Grecian literature, when he showed himself determined to know nothing but Jesus, and to glory only in *his* cross, he was accounted, by Jew and Gentile, as the filth and off-scouring of all things: and thus it will hold universally. If therefore any who sincerely espouse the Gospel meet with little disturbance or censure, it is not because the carnal mind is better reconciled to the truth than formerly in the apostle's days, but because our zeal, faith, and activity are so much inferior to theirs, and our conduct more conformable to the prevailing taste around us.

4. I confess that (as our Saviour has taught us to expect by the parable of the tares) revivals of religion have been generally attended with some incidental offences, and counterfeited by many false appearances. It has been so in times past, it is so at present, and we are far from justifying every thing, and in every degree, that the world is ready to condemn. However, we cannot but complain of a want of candour and ingenuousness in this respect also. Many who bring loud charges against what is irregular and blameable, are evidently glad of the opportunity to prejudice and alarm weak minds: they do not confine their reproof to what is erroneous and unscriptural, but endeavour, by ambiguous expressions, invidious names, and indiscriminate censures, to obscure the state of the

question, and to brand error and truth with the same mark of infamy; they either cannot, or will not, distinguish between evangelical principles and the abuse of them, and when the distinction has been pointed out to them again and again, they refuse attention, and repeat the same stale misrepresentations which they know have been often refuted; they will not allow a grain for infirmity or inadvertence in those whom they oppose, while they demand the largest concessions for themselves and their adherents; they expect strict demonstrations from others, while, in their own cause, they are not ashamed to produce slanders for proofs, and jests for arguments: thus they triumph without a victory, and decide, *ex cathedrâ*, without so much as entering upon the merits of the cause. These methods, however successful, are not new inventions: by such arts and arms as these Christianity was opposed from its first appearance; in this way Lucian, Celsus, and Julian employed their talents, and made themselves famous to future times.

I judge it therefore a seasonable undertaking to attempt the apology of Evangelical Christianity, and to obviate the sophistry and calumnies which have been published against it; and this I hope to do, without engaging in any controversy, by a plain enumeration of facts. I propose to give a brief delineation of Ecclesiastical History from our Saviour's time; and, that the reader may know what to expect, I shall here subjoin the principal points I have in view.

I shall consider the genius and characteristic marks of the Gospel which Jesus taught, and show that, so long as this Gospel was maintained in its purity, it neither admitted nor found a neutrality; but that all who were not partakers of its benefits, were exceedingly enraged

against it. I shall make it appear, that the same objections which have attended any reformations in later ages, were equally strong against Christianity, as taught by Christ and his first disciples; and that the offences and irregularities which have been known to attend a revival of evangelical doctrine in our time, were prevalent, to a considerable degree, under the preaching and inspection of the apostles.

2. When I come to the lives and conduct of those called the *Fathers*, whose names are held in ignorant admiration by thousands, I shall prove, on the one hand, that the doctrines for which the Fathers were truly commendable, and by which many were enabled to seal their profession with their blood, were the same which are now branded with the epithets of *absurd* and *enthusiastic*; and, on the other hand, that the Fathers, however venerable, were men like ourselves, subject to mistakes and infirmities, and began very soon to depart from the purity and simplicity of the Gospel.

3. The progress of our history will manifest that the accession of wealth and power to the Christian profession proved greatly detrimental to the faith, discipline, and manners of the churches, so that, after the emperors publicly espoused the cause of Christ, the power and beauty of the Gospel was gradually eclipsed. Yet, in the most degenerate times, God had a spiritual people, who, though partaking in some degree of the general declension, retained so much of the primitive truth and practice as to incur the hatred and persecution of what is called the Christian world.

4. I shall treat of the means and instruments by which the Lord supported and revived his declining cause during several centuries. 1. In the valleys of Piedmont, Provence, &c. by Berengarius, Waldo, and others. 2. In England, by Wickliffe and his followers. 3. In Bohemia,

by John Huss and Jerome of Prague. 4. In Germany, by Luther. Here I shall take occasion to observe, 1. That these successive reformations were all projected and executed, so far as God was pleased to give success, upon the same principles which are now so industriously exploded by many who would be thought champions of the Protestant faith. 2. That Luther's reformation, the most extensive and successful, and of which we have the best accounts, was soon followed by errors, heresies, and a numerous train of abominations, (as had been the case with primitive Christianity,) which the Romanists, in imitation of their Pagan predecessors, joyfully laid to the charge of the doctrine which Luther preached.

5. As it was not long before the reformed countries needed a second reformation, I shall give some account of the endeavours of many good men in Germany and other places in this view, their principles, success, and the treatment they met with from those who ought to have supported them; and then I shall briefly take notice of the similar occurrences in our country, from the end of Queen Mary's reign to the present time, together with what has been most remarkable in the history of the Gospel in our American settlements.

6. I shall occasionally consider the character and conduct of those persons whom God has honoured with eminent usefulness, in the different periods of his church, point out the defects in their plan, and the mistakes which, through infirmity, in some degree blemished their undertakings.

7. Finally, to make it evident that the spiritual worshippers of God have always been a sect every where spoken against, I shall enumerate some of the reproachful names that have been successively fixed on them, as the mark of general contempt and abhorrence, such

as Patarienes, Lollards, Hugenots, Gospellers, Puritans, Pietists, &c.

These particulars will be illustrated in the course of our history, not exactly in the order here laid down, but as the series of the narration shall require or suggest. I shall not confine myself to a nice uniformity of method, or a dry detail of facts, but shall endeavour to illustrate and apply the several incidents to the use and edification of common readers, and with a view to my primary design, which is (as I have already said) to vindicate the doctrines of the Reformation, or, in other words, the main doctrines taught in the Articles and Homilies of the Church of England, from those unjust and disingenuous invectives which are every day cast upon them, by not a few who owe all their distinction and authority to their having solemnly engaged to defend them.

Whoever considers the intricacy and variety of Ecclesiastical History, and that the best collections of that sort have swelled to a number of folios, will not expect to find every thing that might have deserved a place. The life of a man would hardly suffice to furnish a work of this sort, in its just extent.

I must content myself with selecting a competent number of the most authentic and interesting topics, from the voluminous materials already published, but which, either from the size or scarceness of the books, or the languages in which they are written, are little more known to the generality of readers, than if they had never appeared in print.

I shall avoid, as far as possible, interfering in the con-

troversies on church government, reserving to myself, and willingly leaving to others, the rights of private judgement, the just privilege of Christians, Protestants, and Britons.

It must be confessed that the bulk of Ecclesiastical History, as it is generally understood, is little more than a history of what the passions, prejudices, and interested views of men have prompted them to perpetrate, under the pretext and sanction of religion. Enough has been wrote in this way; curiosity, nay, malice itself, need desire no more. I propose to open a more pleasing prospect, to point out, by a long succession of witnesses, the native tendency and proper influence of the religion of Jesus; to produce the concurring suffrage of different ages, people, and languages, in favour of what the wisdom of the world rejects and reviles; to bring unanswerable proofs that the doctrine of grace is a doctrine according to godliness, that the constraining love of Christ is the most powerful motive to obedience, that it is the property of true faith to overcome the world, and that the true church and people of Christ have endured his cross in every age; the enemy has thrust sore at them that they might fall, but the Lord has been their refuge and support; they are placed upon a rock that cannot be shaken, they are kept [φρουρουμενοι] guarded and garrisoned by the power of God, and therefore the gates of hell have not, cannot, shall not prevail against them.

Per damna, per cædes, ab ipso
Ducit opes animumque ferro.

PREFACE.

A REVIEW of Ecclesiastical History, upon the plan proposed in the Introduction, is a subject of so much extent and difficulty, that, if I had not entered upon it before my admission into the ministry, I believe I should not have attempted it afterwards; for I soon found that the stated care of a large parish, and a due attention to the occasional occurrences of every day, would leave me but little leisure for the prosecution of my design. Upon these accounts it was wholly intermitted for several years; and my progress since I have resumed it, has been so slow, and my interruptions so many, that I had almost determined to content myself with publishing, in a single volume, a Review of the First Century. However, a desire of completing the work has prevailed, and I send this abroad with the title of a *first* volume, because I hope it will be followed by more, if the great God, who has the sovereign disposal of his creatures, shall be pleased to afford me a competent measure of health and ability for the service; but if he should see fit to appoint otherwise, I hope what I now offer to the public (though but a part of my intended plan) may suffice to show how little just ground there is for the insinuations and invectives which have been so plentifully thrown out against the preachers and professors of those doctrines which were once esteemed the life and glory of the Protestant name.

I cannot expect that all my readers will be pleased with the application I have made of New Testament facts to the state of religion in our times; but as I am not conscious

that I have written a single line with a view to provoke or inflame, I have only to entreat a candid perusal, and to commit the issue to Him whom I desire to serve with my spirit in the Gospel of his Son. I have long thought an attempt of this kind would be seasonable; I pray that it may be useful. If it should in any measure contribute to remove or soften the prejudice by which great numbers are prevented from attending to the one thing needful, and induced to speak evil of that which they know not, I shall account my time well employed. I hope I have been influenced by no motives but the love of truth, and a desire to promote the welfare of immortal souls, and therefore have expressed my sentiments with plainness and freedom, as I think it behoves every one to do, when treating on subjects in which the truths of God and the souls of men are immediately concerned.

JOHN NEWTON.

OLNEY,
November, 1769.

A REVIEW

OF

ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY.

BOOK I.

OF THE FIRST PERIOD OF CHRISTIANITY.

CHAPTER I.

The Wisdom and Goodness of God conspicuous in the Period assigned for Christ's Appearance; illustrated by a summary View of the State of Mankind before and at the Time of his Birth.

When the first man had fallen from the happiness and perfection of his creation, had rendered himself corrupt and miserable, and was only capable of transmitting depravity and misery to his posterity; the goodness of God immediately revealed a remedy, adequate to his distressed situation. The Lord Jesus was promised under the character *of the seed of the woman*, as the great deliverer who should repair the breach of sin, and retrieve the ruin of human nature. From that hour, he became the object of faith, and the author of salvation, to every soul that aspired to communion with God, and earnestly sought deliverance from guilt and wrath. This discovery of a Saviour was, in the first ages, veiled under types and shadows; and, like the advancing day, became brighter and brighter, as the time of his manifestation drew near: but it was always sufficient to sustain the hopes, and to purify the hearts, of the true worshippers of God. That the patriarchs and prophets of old were in this

sense *Christians*, that is to say, that their joy and trust centred in the promised Messiah, and that the faith, whereby they overcame the world, was the same faith in the same Lord with ours, is unanswerably proved by St. Paul in several passages ;* particularly in Heb. xi. where he at large insists on the characters of Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and Moses, to illustrate this very point.

At length, in the fulness of time † (as the apostle speaks), the time marked out by the ancient prophecies, the time to which all the previous dispensations of Divine Providence had an express reference and subordination, and which was peculiarly suited to place the manifold wisdom of God and the truths of divine revelation in the clearest light; the long-expected Messiah appeared, as the surety and Saviour of sinners, to accomplish the great work of redemption. For these purposes he was born of a virgin, of the family of David, at the town of Bethlehem, as the prophets had foretold. This great event took place in the 27th year of the reign of Augustus Cæsar (computing from the battle of Actium);‡ and, according to the most received authorities, almost 1920 years from the calling of Abraham, and about 4000 from the creation.

The pride and vanity of man, which prompt him to cavil with his Maker, and to dispute when he ought to obey, have often objected to the expedience and propriety of this appointment. It has been asked, if Christ's appearance was so absolutely necessary, why was it so long deferred? or, if mankind could do without him for so many thousand years, why not longer, or for ever? In attempting a solution of this difficulty, some well-meaning per-

* Rom. iv.; Gal. iii. 16, 17. † Gal. iv. 4.
‡ Bossuet Univ. Hist. Prideaux Connec.

sons, from a too earnest desire to render the counsels of God more acceptable to the narrow apprehensions of unsanctified reason, have given up the ground they ought to have maintained, and made such concessions, as (if extended to their just consequence) would amount to all that the most hardened infidel can desire. The most direct and proper answer is suggested by St. Paul on a similar occasion,* "Who art thou, O man, that repliest against God?" That the will and wisdom of the Creator should direct and limit the inquiries of his rational creatures, is a principle highly consonant to right reason itself. And there can hardly be a stronger proof of human depravity, than that this argument is so generally esteemed inconclusive. But waving this, a sufficient answer may be made, from the premises already advanced.

God was not a debtor to sinful men. He might have left them all to perish (as he left the sinning angels), without the least impeachment of his goodness. But his mercy interposed, and he spared not his own Son, that sinners might be saved in a way consistent with his perfections. But though, in *compassion to us,* he provided the means of salvation; we cannot wonder, that, in *justice to himself,* he laid the plan in such a manner as might most clearly illustrate the riches of his own grace, and most effectually humble and silence the pardoned offenders; to prevent their boasting and

* Rom. ix. 20. It is observable in this passage, that the apostle foresees and states the great objection which would be made to his doctrine; but does not attempt to answer it any farther, than by referring all to the will of him who formed the whole mass, and has a right to dispose of it. Had succeeding writers and teachers imitated his example, declared the plain truth in plain words, and avoided vain and endless reasonings, how many offences would have been prevented!

trusting in themselves, and to give them the most affecting views of his unmerited goodness. We may, therefore, humbly conceive one reason, why Christ was no sooner manifested in the flesh, to have been, that the nature, effects, and inveteracy of sin might be more evidently known; and the insufficiency of every other means of relief demonstrated, by the universal experience of many ages.

What is the history of mankind, but a diffusive exemplification of the Scripture doctrines, concerning the dreadful nature and effects of sin, and the desperate wickedness of the heart of man! We are accustomed from our infancy to call evil good, and good evil. We acquire an early prejudice in favour of heroes, conquerors, and philosophers. But if we consider the facts recorded in the annals of antiquity, divested of the false glare and studied ornaments with which the vanity of writers has disguised them, they will afford but a dark and melancholy review. The spirit of the first-born Cain appears to have influenced the whole human race: the peace of nations, cities, and families, has been continually disturbed by the bitter effects of ambition, avarice, revenge, cruelty, and lust. The general knowledge of God was soon lost out of the world; and, when *his* fear was set aside, the restraints, dictated by the interests of civil society, were always too weak to prevent the most horrid evils. In a word, the character of all ages and countries before the coming of Christ (a few excepted, where the light of revelation was afforded) is strongly, though briefly drawn by St. Paul:*— "Foolish" and infatuated to the highest degree, "disobedient" to the plainest dictates of nature,

* Titus, iii. 3.

reason, and conscience, "enslaved * to divers" dishonourable "lusts and pleasures, living in malice and "envy, hateful" and abominable in themselves, and incessantly "hating" and worrying "one another."

It would be more easy than pleasant to make out this charge by a long induction of particulars. And, without having recourse to the most savage and uncultivated, the proof might be rested on the character of the two most celebrated and civilized nations, and at the time of their greatest refinement, the Greeks and the Romans. St. Paul has given us the result of their boasted improvements † in arts and sciences, in war and commerce, in philosophy and literature; and he says no more than is abundantly confirmed by their own poets and historians. Notwithstanding the marks and fruits of fine taste and exalted genius which were found amongst them, they were habitually abandoned to the grossest vices. Devoted to the most stupid "idolatry," they worshipped the works of their own hands; nay, erected altars to their follies and passions. Their moral characters were answerable to their principles. "Without natural affection," they frequently exposed their helpless infants to perish. They burned with "lusts" not to be named without horror; and this not the meaner sort only, or in secret, but some of their finest spirits and most admired writers ‡ were sunk so low

* "Enslaved." So the original term may be emphatically rendered; at the control of various and opposite passions, hurried about by them all in their turns, and incapable of resisting or refusing the motions of any.

† Rom. i. from v. 21. to the end. An affecting comment on this passage might be collected from Horace, Juvenal, Sallust, and Suetonius.

‡ See Virgil. Eclog. ii.

as to glory in their shame, and openly avow themselves the disgrace of humanity. In their public concerns (notwithstanding their specious pretences) they were "covenant-breakers, implacable, unmerciful," and "unjust." Guilty of the severest oppression, while they boasted highly of equity and moderation;* as was particularly manifested on the destruction of Carthage and Corinth: two memorable instances of the spirit of a government, so undeservedly admired in after-times. And as the Roman power, so the Grecian eloquence was perverted to the worst purposes; to palliate crimes, to consecrate folly, and to recommend falsehood under the guise and semblance of truth.

Such was the character of the people, reputed the wisest and the best of the heathens: and particularly so at the birth of Christ, when the Roman empire was at the summit of authority and splendour. A long experience had shown the general depravity to be not only inveterate, but incurable. For, during several preceding ages, a reformation had been desired and attempted. The principal leaders in this commendable design were called philosophers, and many of their writings are still extant. It must be acknowledged, that some of them had a faint view of several important truths; but, as they neither knew the cause and extent of the disorder, nor the only effectual remedy, they

* See Acts, xxvii. 42. The soldiers would have killed all the prisoners, right or wrong, rather than one of them should have a possibility of escaping: and in this, without doubt, they consulted their own safety, and the spirit of their laws. Why, then, were the Romans so much admired? Could there be a greater proof of cruelty and injustice found amongst the most barbarous nations, than to leave prisoners, who possibly might be innocent, exposed to the wanton caprice of their keepers?

met with little success. Their schemes were various, inconsistent, and even opposite; and each party more successful in opposing the fallacy of other sects, than in maintaining their own. Those who came nearest the truth, and were in earnest to promote it, were very few. Even these were ignorant of some things absolutely necessary to the attainment of the desired end. The best of them were restrained by the fear of men, and a regard to established customs. What they could and did propound, they had not sufficient authority, or influence, to impress upon the consciences of men. And if, in a few instances, they seemed to succeed, the advantage was only imaginary. Where they prevailed on any to relinquish intemperance, they made them full amends, by gratifying their pride. The business passed from hand to hand, from sect to sect, but all to no purpose. After innumerable disputations, and volumes, concerning the supreme good, the beauty of virtue, the fitness of things, and other high-sounding topics, they left matters as bad or worse than they found them. They could not effectually inculcate their doctrine upon a single village or family. Nay, they were but half persuaded themselves, and could not act up to their own principles, when they most needed their support.*

A still more affecting view of the degeneracy of human nature we have in the history of the Israelites, whom God was pleased to set apart from the rest of mankind, for several important purposes. He revealed himself to this people when they were groaning under a heavy bondage in Egypt, from which they had neither spirit nor power to deliver

* Witness the prevarication of Socrates, and the irresolution of Cicero, towards the close of their lives.

themselves. He freed them from their captivity by a series of illustrious miracles. He led them through the sea and the desert. He honoured them with the symbols of his immediate presence; was a wall of fire round about them, and a glory in the midst of them. He spoke to them with an audible voice, and fed them with manna from heaven. He put them in possession of a good land, and fought against all their enemies. Might it not have been expected that a people so highly favoured and honoured should have been obedient and thankful? Some of them were so. His grace always preserved a spiritual people amongst them, whose faith in the Messiah taught them the true meaning of the Levitical law, and inspired them with zeal and sincerity in the service of God. But the bulk of the nation was always refractory and disobedient. While in the wilderness, they murmured against the Lord upon every new difficulty. Within a few days after the law had been delivered in flames and thunder from the top of Sinai, they formed a molten calf to worship, and would have made a captain who might lead them back into Egypt. They despised the good land; therefore their carcases* fell in the wilderness. Their posterity retained the same spirit. They learned the ways of the heathen, whom the Lord

* 1 Cor. x. 5. They were overthrown in the wilderness. Κατεστρώθησαν, they fell in heaps, like grass before the sithe; and this, after all the great things they had seen and been partakers of. Of the many hundred thousands, who were above twenty years old, when they were delivered from Egypt, only two persons were spared to enter the promised land: a striking admonition to us, not to rest in the participation of external privileges of any kind. For these people had seen the Lord's wonders at the Red Sea, had rejoiced in the destruction of the Egyptians, and been fed with manna from heaven.

cast out before them. They adopted every idolatrous practice, they transgressed every divine command. During a long succession of warnings, chastisements, and deliverances, they became worse and worse; so that, in Jeremiah's time, they equalled, or exceeded, the heathens around them in ignorance and wickedness. They mocked the messengers of God, despised his words, and misused his prophets, till his wrath arose against them, and there was no remedy. At length their land was laid waste, Jerusalem burnt, the greater part of the people destroyed, and the remainder carried captives into Chaldea.

Upon their return from captivity, they seemed, for a little while, to retain a sense of their duty, and of the judgements they had suffered. But all was soon forgot. Their wickedness now put on a new form, and discovered the evil of the heart of man in a new point of view. They were no longer prone to idolatry. They avoided the most distant appearance of it with scrupulous exactness; and professed the highest attachment to God. They boasted themselves in his law; and from a presumption that they were his peculiar people, they despised and hated the rest of mankind. It is not our present concern, closely to follow their history. Let it suffice to say, that, by substituting a regard to the letter of the law, in the place of spiritual obedience, and by presuming to multiply their own inventions and traditions,* and to hold them no less binding than the positive commands of God; they,

* See one instance, Matt. xv. 5. The expression is rather obscure; but the sense is, "What you might expect from me for "your support, I have put out of my own power; it is devoted "to the service of God and the temple." And teachers allowed this to be a legal exemption. Any man who would pay handsomely to the priests and the temple might treat his parents as

by degrees, attained to a pitch of impiety unknown to former times; and which was so much the more offensive and abominable, as it was covered with the mask of religion, and accompanied with a claim to superior sanctity.

Pride, hypocrisy, and interest, divided them into sects; and the contests of each party for superiority, threw the state into frequent commotions. Their intrigues at length brought upon them the Roman power. The city was taken by Pompey; and, though they afterwards retained a shadow of liberty, their government was determined, from that time, by the will of the conquerors. At length Herod, a foreigner, obtained it. In his reign Christ was born.

Thus the state of mankind, before the coming of Christ, proved, with the fullest evidence, the necessity of his interposition. And, in the mean time, the world had not been left utterly helpless and hopeless. His future advent had been revealed from the beginning; and, by faith in that revelation, a remnant had subsisted in every age, who had triumphed over the general evil, and maintained the cause of God and truth. It was not necessary to the salvation of *these* that he should have been manifested sooner; for they beheld his day afar off, and rejoiced in his name. With respect to *others*, destitute of divine faith, his incarnation would have had the same effect at any period, as it had on multitudes who actually saw him in the flesh, but, offended with the meanness of his

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he pleased. Thus they set aside the express command of God, by their own authority, and for their own advantage. The same dispensing, commuting, engrossing spirit has too often appeared in the Christian church.

circumstances, and the great honours he vindicated to himself, rejected him with disdain.

But farther. The late appearance of Christ in the world gave room for the full accomplishment of the prophecies concerning him, which had been repeated at different times with increasing clearness and precision; insomuch, that the time, place, and every circumstance of his birth, life, and death, had been distinctly foretold. Thus the truth and authority of the Old Testament were confirmed; and the wisdom, power, and providence of God, over-ruling and directing the contingencies of human affairs to produce this grand event in its determinate period, were displayed to the highest advantage. And as the state of the *moral* world made his presence highly necessary, so God, in due time, disposed the *political* state of mankind in such a manner as to prepare the way for a speedy and general publication of the Gospel through the world.

It would be pleasing to consider how the rise, and fall, and change of empires, were made successively subservient to introduce the kingdom of Jesus. But this would lead me beyond my present bounds. I can only just hint at two or three events which had a more general influence. The first is, the rapid progress of Alexander, whose extensive conquest, divided amongst his successors, laid the foundation of four powerful monarchies, and opened an intercourse between countries till then unknown to each other. By this means the Greek tongue became familiar and common to many nations; and soon after the Hebrew Scriptures were translated into that language, and the prophecies concerning the Messiah were laid open to the Gentiles. To this may be added the several dispersions of the Jews; who, upon

various occasions, had been settled in almost every considerable city under the heathen governments. By their traditions and prophecies, imperfectly understood, a general expectation had been raised of some extraordinary deliverer, who would shortly appear. Lastly, by the growth of the Roman empire, many nations and people, who were before acquainted by means of one common language, became more closely united under one dominion. Every province had a necessary connexion with Rome; and Rome was the centre and resort of the greatest part of the then habitable world.

As to the Jews, many things concurred to animate their wishes and expectations of the Messiah's approach. The prophecies were in their hands. Many of their wise men were apprised that the term of seventy weeks, spoken of by Daniel, was drawing to a period. The sceptre seemed departing from Judah; they groaned under a foreign yoke, from which, they vainly imagined, the Messiah would set them free, and give them, in their turn, a temporal dominion over the nations of the earth. Though this mistake prompted them to reject Christ when he preached a deliverance unsuitable to their worldly notions, yet it made them solicitous and eager for the appearance of the person on whom their hopes were fixed. A few amongst them, however, better instructed in the true meaning of the prophecies, were secretly waiting, in the exercises of faith and prayer, for the consolation of Israel.*

From this general view of the moral and political state of mankind, and the leading designs of divine revelation and providence, previous to the birth of Christ, we may conclude, that the time

* Luke, ii. 25.

fixed on from before the foundation of the world for his actual exhibition amongst men was not an arbitrary, but a wise and gracious appointment; a determination admirably suited to place the most important truths in the strongest light. In this way, the depravity, misery, and helplessness of man, the mercy of God, and the truth of the Scriptures, were unquestionably proved to all succeeding times. The necessity of a Saviour was felt and acknowledged; and the suitableness, all-sufficiency, and condescension of Jesus, when he undertook and accomplished the great designs in which his love engaged him, were more strongly illustrated by the preceding contrast. He knew the whole human race were sinners, rebels, enemies against God: he knew the terms, the price of our redemption; that he must obey, suffer, weep, and die. Yet he came. He emptied himself of his glory and honour, and took on him the form of a servant, to bring the glad tidings of salvation to men. In effect, the Gospel of Christ soon appeared to be the great *desideratum*, and completely redressed the evils which philosophy had given up as desperate. The genius and characteristic marks of this Gospel will be considered in the following chapter.

CHAPTER II.

The Character and Genius of the Gospel, as taught and exemplified by Christ.

A SUCCINCT history of the life of our Lord and Saviour is no part of our plan. This the inspired evangelists have performed with the highest advan-

tage and authority; and their writings (through the mercy of God) are generally known and read in our own tongue. It will be sufficient for me to select a few passages from them, to explain and confirm the several points I have proposed to treat of in this book, as principles whereon to ground our observations on the spirit and conduct of after-times.

At present I propose to state the true character and genius of his doctrine. This may seem a digression from my main design; but, as I shall often have occasion to speak of the Gospel, and the opposition it has met with, it will not be improper, in the first place, to exhibit a general idea of what we mean by the Gospel; especially as the professed followers of Christ have been, and still are, not a little divided upon the point.

We may describe the Gospel to be—*A divine revelation in the person of Jesus Christ, discovering the misery of fallen man by sin, and the means of his complete recovery by the free grace of God, through faith, unto holiness and happiness.* The explication and proof of these particulars from our Lord's express declarations, and the tenour of his conduct, will sufficiently point out the principal marks and characters of his Gospel. But before we enter upon this, two things may be premised.

1. Though I confine myself to the writings of the evangelists in this disquisition, yet it should be remembered, that whilst our Lord was visibly conversant with men, he did not ordinarily discover the whole system of his doctrine in express terms. He spoke to the multitude, for the most part, in parables,* and was not forward to proclaim himself the Messiah upon every† occa-

* Matt. xiii. 10, 11. † Ch. xvi. 20.

sion. And, even in his more intimate discourses with his disciples, he taught them with a wise and gracious accommodation to their circumstances and weakness.* The full explanation of many things, he referred to the time when, having accomplished his wish, and returned victorious and triumphant into heaven, he should send down, according to his promise, the Holy Spirit to enlighten and comfort his people. Then,† and not before, they fully understood the meaning of all they had seen and heard while he was with them.

2. The doctrine of the Gospel is not like a mathematical problem, which conveys precisely the same degree of truth and certainty to every one that understands the terms. If so, all believers would be equally enlightened, who enjoy the common privilege of the written word. But there is, in fact, an amazing variety in this respect. Where this doctrine is truly understood, though in the lowest degree, it inspires the soul with a supreme love to Jesus, and a trust in him for salvation. And those who understand it best have not yet received all the evidence, comfort, and influence from it which it is capable of affording. The riches of grace and wisdom in this dispensation are unsearchable ‡ and immense, imparted in different measures, and increased from time to time, according to the good pleasure § of the Spirit of

* John xvi. 12. 25. Our Lord taught his disciples gradually; their knowledge advanced as the light, or (according to his own beautiful simile) first the blade, then the ear; first green corn, then fully ripe. He considered their difficulties, he made allowance for their infirmities. It is to be wished his example was followed by all who teach in his name. Some are so hasty, they expect to teach to others in one discourse or interview, all that they have attained themselves by the study and experience of many years.

† Mark, ix. 10.; John, ii. 22. ‡ Ephes. iii. 8. § 1 Cor. xii. 11.

God, who furnishes his people with light and strength proportioned to their exigences, situation, and the services or trials he calls them to; not without respect to the degree of their diligence, obedience, and simplicity in waiting upon him. For these reasons, it is not to be expected that every one who serves God with his spirit in the Gospel of his Son, should have exactly the same views of this sublime subject. Neither do I presume to think myself capable of displaying it in its full light and beauty. I desire, therefore, to write with candour, and entreat a candid perusal, as conscious of my infirmities, and the imperfections necessarily attending the human mind, in this present state of things. Yet I am not afraid to express my just confidence, that I shall advance no principle, as a part of the Gospel doctrine, which does not assuredly belong to it.

I now proceed to explain and confirm the definition I have given of the Gospel.

1. It is a divine revelation, a discovery of truths which, though of the highest moment, could have been known no other way. That God will forgive sin, is beyond the power of unassisted reason to prove. The prevailing custom of sacrifices is, indeed, founded upon such a hope; but this practice was, without doubt, derived from revelation, for reason could not have suggested such an expedient. And those among the heathens, whether priests or philosophers, who spoke of forgiveness of sin, knew but little what sin was. Revelation was needful, to discover sin in its true nature and demerit; and where this is known, the awakened and wounded conscience is not easily persuaded that a just and holy God will pardon iniquity. So likewise the immortality of the soul, after all the fine things said upon the subject, remained a pro-

blematical point among the heathen. Their best arguments, though conclusive to us, were not so to themselves.* When they laid aside their books, and returned to the common affairs of life, they forgot the force of their own demonstrations. But the Gospel of Christ is an express, complete, and infallible revelation, as he himself often assured his hearers.†

And as the subject-matter of the Gospel contained in the New Testament is a revelation from God, so it is only by a divine revelation, that what is there read or heard can be truly understood. This is an offensive assertion, but must not be omitted, when the question is concerning the marks and characters of Christ's doctrine. Thus when Peter made that noble confession,‡ "Thou "art Christ the Son of the living God," our Lord answers, "Blessed art thou, Simon, for flesh and "blood hath not revealed this to thee, but my "Father which is in heaven." If Peter could read, and had the scriptures to peruse, these were advantages derived from flesh and blood, from his birth, parents, and teachers; advantages which the Scribes and Pharisees, our Lord's most inveterate enemies, enjoyed in common with him. The difference lay in a revelation of the truth to his heart. As it is said in another place,§ "Thou

* Cicero frankly confesses this. Nescio quomodo, dum lego, assentior; cum posui librum, et mecum ipse de immortalitate animorum cœpi cogitare, assentio omnis illa elabitur. Tusc. Quest. Lib. i.

† John, vii. 16.; viii. 26. ‡ Matt. xvi. 16, 17.

§ That babes should be admitted to this knowledge, and express a certainty, where the wise are all perplexity and darkness, is extremely mortifying to human pride. But are not these the words of Christ? How arrogant, how dangerous must it be, to be displeased with that dispensation at which he rejoiced!

"hast hid these things from the wise and pru-
"dent, and revealed them unto babes."

2. It is a revelation, in the person of Jesus Christ. As a revelation, it stands distinguished from all false religions; and as revealed in the person of Jesus, it is distinguished from all former dispensations of the true God, who, in time past, had spoken by the prophets, but was pleased, in those last days, to speak unto us by his Son. The law was given by Moses, both to enforce the necessity of a universal sinless obedience, and to point out the *efficacy* of a better mediator; but grace and truth, *grace answerable to the sinner's guilt and misery*, and the truth and full accomplishment of all its typical services, came by Jesus Christ. All the grand peculiarities of the Gospel centre in this point, the constitution of the person of Christ.* In the knowledge of him standeth our eternal life. And though our Lord, on some occasions, refused to answer the captious questions of his enemies, and expressed himself so as to leave his hearers in suspense; yet, at other times, he clearly asserted his own just rights and honours, and proposed himself as the supreme object of love, trust, and worship, the fountain of grace and power, the resurrection, life, and happiness of all believers.

That he vindicated to himself those characters and prerogatives which incommunicably belong to God, is evident from the texts referred to. He was a judge of the thoughts and intents of the heart.† He forgave sins. He adopted the style of supreme majesty.‡ His wonderful works were

* Col. ii. 3. 9.; John, xvii. 3. † Matt. ix. 2, 3.

‡ John, viii. 38.; John, xiv. 9. "He that hath seen me hath "seen my Father." Which of all the creatures of God dare use

proof of an almighty power. He restored sight, health, and life, with a word.* He controlled the elements,† and showed himself‡ Lord of quick and dead, angels, and devils; and both his enemies and his friends understood his claim. The Jews attempted to stone him§ for making himself equal to God; and he received from Thomas the most express and solemn ascription of Deity that can be offered from a creature to his Creator.‖

Yet all this glory was veiled. The word was made flesh; he assumed the humam nature, and shared in all its infirmities, sin excepted. He was born of a woman, he passed through the states of infancy, childhood, and youth, and gradually increased in wisdom and stature.¶ He was often, yea, always afflicted. He endured** hunger, thirst, and weariness. He†† sighed, he wept, he groaned, he bled, he died; but amidst all, he was spotless and undefiled. He‡‡ repelled the temptations of Satan, he appealed to his most watchful enemies for his integrity, he rendered universal unceasing obedience to the will of God, and completely fulfilled the whole law. In him the perfection of wisdom and goodness shined forth. He burned with love to

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these words! God, in the strictest sense, is invisible and inaccessible; but he communicates with his creatures through Christ his Son, without whom he cannot be seen or known at all. We cannot enjoy any spiritual, clear, and comfortable views of God, unless our thoughts fix upon the man Christ Jesus; he is the door and the veil to the holy of holies, and there is no coming to the Father by any other way.

* Matt. viii. 3. ix. 30; John, iv. 53.

† Matt. xiv. 25.; Mark, iv. 39.

‡ John, xi. 25. 44.; Luke, iv. 34.; Matt iv. 11.; Luke, x. 17.

§ John, v. 18.; x. 33. ‖ John, xx. 28. ¶ Luke, ii. 52.

** Mark, xi. 12.; John, iv. 6, 7.

†† Mark, vii. 34.; John, xi. 35. 38.; Luke, xxii. 44.

‡‡ Matt. iv. 1. 10.; John, viii. 46.; xiv. 30.; xvii. 4.

God, with compassion to men; a compassion which he freely extended to the most necessitous and the most unworthy. He returned good for evil, wept* for his enemies, prayed for his murderers. Such was his character, a divine person in the human nature, † God manifest in the flesh. And from this union, all he did, and all he said, derived a dignity, authority, and efficacy, which rendered him every way worthy to be the Teacher, Exemplar, Lord, and Saviour of mankind.

3. In the person and sufferings of Christ there is at once a discovery of the misery of fallen man, and the means of his complete recovery. It has already been observed, that the full explication of these truths was deferred till after his resurrection; and the subsequent writings of his apostles are useful, to give us a complete view of the cause, design, and benefits of his passion. At present we confine ourselves to his own words. He frequently‡ taught the necessity and certainty of his sufferings; he spoke of them as the great design of his incarnation, that it was by this means he should draw§ all unto himself, that he was on this account, especially, the object of his Father's complacency, because he voluntarily substituted himself to die for his people. He enforced the necessity¶ of believing on him in this view; and applied to himself the prophecies of the Old Testament,‖ which speak to the same purpose. Isaiah had foretold, that the Lord would lay upon him the iniquities of us all; that he was to be wounded for our transgressions, and by his stripes we should be healed. Here then we see the manifold wisdom of God. His inexpressible love to us

* Luke, xix. 41.; xxiii. 34.
† 1 Tim. iii. 16.
‡ Matt. xvi. 21.; xx. 28.
§ John, xii. 32.; x. 17.
¶ John, iii. 14—18.
‖ Luke xxiv. 25—27.; Isa. liii.

commended; his mercy exalted in the salvation of sinners; his truth and justice vindicated, in the full satisfaction for sin exacted from the surety; his glorious holiness and opposition to all evil, and his invariable faithfulness to his threatenings and his promises. Considered in this light, our Saviour's passion is the most momentous, instructive, and comfortable theme that can affect the heart of man; but if his substitution and proper atonement are denied, the whole is unintelligible. We can assign no sufficient reason why a person of his excellence was abandoned to such miseries and indignities; nor can we account for that agony and distress which seized him at the prospect of what was coming upon him. It would be highly injurious to his character, to suppose he was thus terrified by the apprehension of death or bodily pain, when so many frail and sinful men have encountered death, armed with the severest tortures, with far less emotion.

Here, as in a glass, we see the evil of sin, and the misery of man. The greatness of the disorder may be rationally inferred from the greatness of the means necessary to remove it. Would we learn the depth of the fall of man, let us consider the depth of the humiliation of Jesus to restore him. Behold the Beloved of God, perfectly spotless and holy, yet made an example of the severest vengeance; prostrate and agonizing in the garden; enduring the vilest insults from wicked men; torn with whips, and nails, and thorns; suspended, naked, wounded, and bleeding upon the cross, and there heavily complaining, that God had for a season forsaken him. Sin was the cause of all his anguish. He stood in the place of sinners, and therefore was not spared. Not any, or all, the evils which the world has known, afford such proof of

the dreadful effects and detestable nature of sin, as the knowledge of Christ crucified. Sin had rendered the case of mankind so utterly desperate, that nothing less than the blood and death of Jesus could retrieve it. If any other expedient could have sufficed, his prayer, that the bitter cup might pass from him, would have been answered. But what his enemies intended as the keenest reproach, his redeemed people will for ever repeat as the expression of his highest praise,* "He saved others, "himself he cannot save." Justice would admit no inferior atonement, love would not give up the cause of fallen, ruined man. Being therefore determined to save others, he could not, consistently with this gracious design and undertaking, deliver himself.

Again, the means and certainty of a salvation proportioned to the guilt and misery of sinners, and a happiness answerable to the utmost capacity of the soul of man, are revealed in the same astonishing dispensation of divine love. When Jesus was baptised he was pointed out by a voice from heaven;† "This is my beloved Son, in whom (or "for whose sake) I am well pleased." He afterwards proclaimed his‡ own authority and sufficiency, that all things were delivered into his hands, and invited every weary, heavy laden soul to seek to him for refreshment and peace. He gave the most express assurances,§ that whoever applied to him should in no case be rejected. He‖ mentioned his death and sufferings as the principal circumstance that should engage the hearts and confirm the hopes of sinners. He gave repeated promises

* Luke, xxiii. 35.
† Matt. iii. 17.
‡ Matt. xi. 27, 28.
§ John, vi. 37.
‖ John, xii. 32, 33.

that those who believe in him shall never* perish, that neither force nor fraud should frustrate his intentions in their favour; that after his ascension he would send the Holy Spirit† to supply his bodily presence; that his power, grace, and providence should be with his people to the end of the world; and, finally, that he would manage their‡ concerns in heaven, and at length return to take them to himself, that they might be with him for ever, to behold and to share his glory.

4. In this revelation God has illustriously displayed the glory of his free grace. The miserable and guilty, who find themselves without either plea or hope, but what the Gospel proclaims by Christ, are invited without exception, and received without condition. Though they have been the vilest offenders, they are freely accepted in the beloved, and none of their iniquities shall be remembered any more. On the contrary, the most respectable characters amongst men, are declared to be of no avail in point of acceptance with God; but in this respect all the race of Adam are upon equal terms, and must be involved in the same ruin, without an absolute dependence on the great Mediator. This is an illustrious peculiarity of the Gospel, which the proud, fallen nature of man, cannot but resist and find fault with, till the conscience is truly affected with the guilt and demerit of sin. The whole tenour of our Saviour's ministry was suited to depreciate the most specious attainments of those who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and to encourage all who felt and confessed themselves to be miserable sinners.

Parcere subjectis, et debellare superbos.

* John, x. 28. † John, xvi. 7. 13, 14.; Matt. xxviii. 20.
‡ John, xiv. 3. 13, 14.

This was a chief cause of the opposition he met with in his own person, and has awakened the hatred and dislike of the bulk of mankind against his doctrine ever since. It is necessary, therefore, to confirm it by proofs which cannot be evaded by any who profess to acknowledge him to be a teacher sent from God.

He was daily conversant with many who were wise and righteous in their own eyes, and we find he omits no opportunity to expose and condemn their pretensions. He spake one parable purposely to persons of this stamp,* and describes a Pharisee boasting of his observance of the law. He paid tithes, he fasted, he prayed, he was not chargeable with adultery or extortion. He could say more for himself than many can who affect to be thought religious. But the poor publican (though despicable in his sight) who, conscious of his unworthiness, durst not lift up his eyes to heaven, but smote upon his breast, and cried for mercy, was in a happier and safer condition than the other with all his boasted obedience.

Another remarkable instance is that of the ruler,† who accosted our Lord in a respectful manner, asking him what he should do to inherit eternal life. His address was becoming, his inquiry seemed sincere; and the character he gave of himself was such, as men, who see not the heart, might have judged exemplary and praise-worthy. When our Lord referred him to the precepts of the law, he answered that he had kept them all from his youth. Yet one thing, we read, was wanting. What could this one thing be, which rendered so fair a character of no value? We may collect it from the event. He wanted a deep sense of his need of a

* Luke, xviii. 9—14. † Matt. xix. 16.; Luke, xviii. 18.

Saviour. If he had been possessed of this one thing, he would willingly have relinquished all to follow Jesus. But ignorant of the spirituality of the law, he trusted to a defective obedience; and the love of the world prevailing in his heart, he chose rather to part with Christ than with his possessions.

On the other hand, how readily our Lord received sinners, notorious sinners, who were vile to a proverb, appears from the remarkable account given by St. Luke* of a woman whose character had been so infamous, that the Pharisee wondered that Jesus could permit her to touch him. But, though a great sinner, she found great forgiveness; therefore she loved much and wept† much. She had nothing to say for herself; but Jesus espoused her cause, and pronounced her pardon. He likewise silenced the proud caviller by a parable, that sweetly illustrates the freeness and genuine effect of the grace of God, which can only be possessed or prized by those who see they must perish without it.

And this was the general effect of his preaching. Publicans and sinners thronged to hear him, received his doctrine, and found rest for their souls. As this discrimination gave a general offence, he took occasion to deliver the parable of the prodigal;‡ in the former part of which he gives a most endearing view of the grace of God, in pardoning and accepting the most underserving. He

* Luke, vii. 37.

† She washed his feet with tears. Ηρξατο Βρεχειν, she began to rain tears upon his feet. Her head was waters, and her eyes fountains. To receive a free pardon of many sins, a pardon bought with blood—'tis this causes the heart to melt, and the eyes to flow.

‡ Luke, xv. 11.

afterwards, in the close, shows the pride, stubbornness, and enmity of the self-righteous Pharisees, under the character of the elder* brother. While his language and deportment discovered the disobedience and malice of his heart, he pretended that he had never broke his father's commands. The self-condemned sinner, when he first receives hope of pardon, experiences a joy and peace in believing: this is represented by the feast and fatted calf. But the religious, orderly brother had never received so much as a kid. He had found no true comfort in all his formal round of duties; and therefore was exceedingly angry that the prodigal should at once obtain those marks of favour, which he, who had remained with his father, had been always a stranger to.

But the capital exemplification of this, and indeed of every doctrine of the Gospel, is contained in the account given of the thief† upon the cross; a passage which has, perhaps, been more mistaken and misrepresented by commentators, than any other in the New Testament. The grace of God has shone so bright in this instance, that it has dazzled the eyes even of good men. They have attempted to palliate the offender's crime, or at least to suppose that this was the first fault of the kind he had committed; that perhaps he had been

* It may be objected to this interpretation, that the father speaks to the elder brother in terms of complacence. "Son, "thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine." But this is not the only place where our Lord addresses the Pharisees in their own style, according to the opinion they conceived of themselves. Thus, Matt. viii. 12. he says, "The children of the "kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness"—he does not mean those who were truly the children of the kingdom, but those who pretended to be so.

† Luke, xxiii. 39—43.

surprised into it, and might in other respects have been of a fairer character. They conjecture that this was the first time he had heard of Jesus, and that there was not only some sort of merit in his faith and confession under these circumstances, but that the death of Jesus happily coinciding with his own, afforded him an advantage peculiar to himself; and that therefore this was an exempt case, and not to be drawn into a precedent to after-times.

If it was my professed design to comment upon this malefactor's case, I should consider it in a different light. The nature of his punishment, which was seldom inflicted but on those who were judged the most atrocious criminals, makes it more than probable that he did not suffer for a first offence. Nor was he simply a *thief*. The history of those times abounds with the mischiefs committed by public robbers, who used to join in considerable bands for rapine and murder, and commit the greatest excesses. In all likelihood, the malefactors crucified with Jesus were of this sort, accomplices and equals in guilt, and therefore judged to die together, receiving (as appears by the criminal's own confession on the cross) the just reward of their deeds.* Here was indeed a fair occasion to show the sovereignty and triumph of grace, contrasted with the most desperate pitch of obdurate wickedness; to show, on the one hand, that the compassion and the power of Christ were not diminished, when his sufferings were at the height, and he

* It seems probable from the history that these were of Barabbas's gang. They had made an insurrection, committed murder, and were, with their ringleader, convicted and condemned. He, in dishonour to Jesus, was spared, whilst these his accomplices were executed with him.

seemed abandoned to his enemies; and, on the other, the insufficiency of any means to change a sinner's heart without the powerful efficacy of divine grace. The one malefactor, brought at length to deserved punishment, far from repenting of his crimes, regardless of his immediate appearance before God, thought it some relaxation of his torments, to join with the barbarous multitude in reviling Jesus, who hung upon a cross by his side. He was not ignorant that Jesus was put to death, for professing himself the Messiah; but he upbraided him with his character, and treated him as an impostor. In this man we see the progress, wages, and effects of sin. His wickedness brought him to a terrible end, and sealed him up under a fatal hardness of heart, so that he died desperate, though Jesus Christ was* crucified before his eyes. But his companion was impressed by what he saw; his heart relented. He observed the patience of the divine Sufferer; he heard him pray for his murderers; he felt himself miserable, and feared the God with whom he had to do. In this distress he received faith to apply to Jesus, and his prayer was granted and exceeded. He who sent the fair-spoken ruler away sorrowful, answered the first desire of a malefactor at the point of death; "This "day thou shalt be with me in Paradise." This certainly was an instance of free distinguishing grace. Here was salvation bestowed upon one of

* Comp. Matt. xxvii. 39. How can it be expected that no more than a constant repetition of Christ's death, should be an invincible means of changing the heart, when the actual sight of his sufferings was attended with so little effect! Sin must be felt as the disease and ruin of the soul, and the sufferings of Jesus acknowledged as the only possible remedy, before we can truly sympathize with him, and say, I am crucified with Christ.

the vilest sinners, through faith in Jesus, without previous works, or a possibility of performing any. And as such, it is recorded for the encouragement of all who see themselves destitute of righteousness and strength, and that, like the thief on the cross, they have no refuge or hope, but in the free mercy of God through Christ.

5. The medium, by which the Gospel becomes the power of God unto salvation, is *Faith.* By faith we do not mean *a bare assent,* founded upon testimony and rational evidence, *that the facts recorded in the New Testament are true.* A faith of this sort experience proves to be consistent with a wicked life; whereas the Gospel faith purifies the heart, and overcomes the world. Neither do we mean, a confidence of the forgiveness of sin impressed upon the mind in a sudden and instantaneous manner. Faith is, indeed, founded upon the strongest evidence, and may often be confirmed by ineffable manifestations from the Fountain of light and comfort: but the discriminating property of true faith, *is a reliance upon Jesus Christ, for all the ends and purposes for which the Gospel reveals him;* such as the pardon of sin, peace of conscience, strength for obedience, and eternal life. It is wrought by the operation of the Holy Spirit, and presupposes a knowledge of him and of ourselves; of our indigence, and his fulness; our unworthiness, and his merits; our weakness, and his power. The true believer builds upon the * person and word of Christ as the foundation of his hope; he enters by him as the only † door to the knowledge, communion, and love of God; he feeds upon him by faith in his heart, with thanksgiving, as ‡ the bread of life; he embraces

* Matt, vii. 24.; xvi. 18. † John, x. 9. ‡ John, vi. 54—57.

his righteousness as the wedding* garment, whereby alone he expects admission to the marriage-feast of heaven. He derives all his strength and comfort from his influence, as the branch† from the root. He intrusts himself to his care, as the wise and good shepherd‡ of his soul. Sensible of his own ignorance, defects, and his many enemies, he receives Christ§ as his teacher, priest, and king, obeys his preceptor, confides on his mediation, expects and enjoys his powerful protection. In a word, he renounces all confidence‖ in the flesh, and rejoices in Christ Jesus as his Saviour; and thus he attains to worship God in spirit and in truth, is supported through all the conflicts and trials of life, possesses a stable peace in the midst of a changing world, goes on from strength to strength, and is, at length, made more than conqueror, through him that has loved him. This is the life of faith. The degree and exercise of it is various in different persons, and in the same person at different times (as has been already hinted); but the principle itself is universal, permanent, and efficacious in all that truly believe. And nothing less than this faith is sufficient to give any man a right to the name of a Christian.

6. The final cause, or great ends of the Gospel respecting man, are¶ holiness and happiness; the complete restoration of the soul to the favour and image of God, or eternal life begun here, to be consummated in glory. What has been already said, renders it needless to enlarge upon this head. Nor shall we concern ourselves here to vindicate this doctrine we have laid

* Matt. xxii. 11.; Rom. xiii. 14. † John, xv. 4, 5.
‡ John, x. 14. § John, vi. 68. ‖ Phil. iii. 3.
¶ Matt. i. 21.; xxv. 34; John, xvii. 24.

down from the charge of licentiousness; because it is our professed design in the progress of this work to prove, from the history of the church, not only that these principles, when rightly understood, will infallibly produce obedience and submission to the whole will of God, but that these only can do it. Wherever and whenever the doctrines of free grace and justification by faith have prevailed in the Christian church, and according to the degree of clearness with which they have been enforced, the practical duties of Christianity have flourished in the same proportion. Wherever they have declined, or been tempered with the reasonings and expedients of men, either from a well meant though mistaken fear lest they should be abused, or from a desire to accommodate the Gospel, and render it more palatable to the depraved taste of the world, the consequence has always been an equal declension in practice. So long as the Gospel of Christ is maintained without adulteration, it is found sufficient for every valuable purpose; but when the wisdom of man is permitted to add to the perfect work of God, a wide door is opened for innumerable mischiefs—the divine commands are made void, new inventions are continually taking place, zeal is diverted into a wrong channel, and the greatest stress laid upon things, either unnecessary or unwarrantable. Hence, perpetual occasion is given for strife, debates, and divisions, till at length the spirit of Christianity is forgot, and the power of godliness lost, amidst fierce contentions for the form.

To sum up this inquiry in few words. The Gospel is a wise and gracious dispensation, equally suited to the necessities of man and to the perfections of God. It proclaims relief

to the miserable, and excludes none but those who exclude themselves. It convinces a sinner that he is unworthy of the smallest mercy, at the same time that it gives him a confidence to expect the greatest. It cuts off all pretence of glorying in the flesh, but it enables a guilty sinner to glory in God. To them that have no might, it increases strength; it gives eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame; subdues the enmity of the heart, shews the nature of sin, the spirituality and sanction of the law with the fullest evidence; and, by exhibiting Jesus as made of God, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption to all who believe, it makes obedience practicable, easy, and delightful. The constraining love of Christ engages the heart and every faculty in his service. His example illustrates and recommends his precepts, his presence inspires courage and activity under every pressure, and the prospect of the glory to be revealed is a continual source of joy and peace, which passeth the understanding of the natural man. Thus the Gospel filleth the hungry with good things, but it sendeth the rich and self-sufficient empty away, and leaves the impenitent and unbelieving in a state of aggravated guilt and condemnation.

CHAPTER III.

Concerning the true ground of the opposition our Lord met with in the course of his ministry; and the objections and artifices his enemies employed to prejudice the people against him, and prevent the reception of his doctrine.

If our knowledge of the history of Jesus was confined to the excellence of his character, and

the diffusive goodness that shone forth in all his actions; we should hardly conceive it possible that any people could be so lost to gratitude and humanity, as to oppose him. He went about doing good: he raised the dead, healed every disease, and relieved the distresses of all who applied to him, without any difference of cases, characters, or parties; as the sun, with a rich and unwearied profusion, fills every eye with his light. Wisdom flowed from his lips, and his whole conduct was perfect and inculpable. How natural is it to expect that a person so amiable and benevolent, so blameless and exemplary, should have been universally revered!*

But we find, in fact, it was far otherwise. Instead of the honours he justly deserved, the returns he met with were reproach, persecution, and death. The wonders of his power and goodness were maliciously ascribed to Satan; he was branded as an impostor, a madman, and demoniac; he was made the sport of servants and soldiers, and, at length, publicly executed, with every possible circumstance of ignominy and torture, as a malefactor of the worst sort.

* The heathen moralists have supposed that there is something so amiable in virtue, that, could it be visible, it would necessarily attract the love and admiration of all beholders. This sentiment has been generally admired; and we need not wonder; since it flatters the pride of man, without thwarting his passions. In the Lord Jesus, this great *desideratum* was vouchsafed; virtue and goodness were pleased to become visible, were manifest in the flesh. But did the experiment answer to the ideas of the philosophers? Alas! to the reproach of mankind, Jews and Gentiles conspired to treat him with the utmost contempt. They loved darkness, and therefore could not bear the light. They had more compassion and affection for the most infamous malefactor; therefore, when the alternative was proposed to them, they released Barabbas, a robber and a murderer, and nailed Jesus and virtue to the cross.

What could be the cause and motives of such injurious treatment? This is the subject of our present inquiry. It might indeed be answered very briefly (as it has been) by ascribing it to the peculiar wickedness and perverseness of the Jews. There is not a fallacy more frequent or pleasing to the minds of men, than, while they act contrary to present duty, to please themselves with imagining, how well they would have behaved in another situation, or a different age. They think it a mark of virtue to condemn the wickedness of former times, not aware that they themselves are governed by the same spirit. Thus these very Jews spoke highly of the persons of the prophets, while they rejected their testimony; and blamed their forefathers for shedding innocent blood, at the time they were thirsting for the blood of Jesus.* It is equally easy, at present, to condemn the treachery of Judas, the cowardice of Pilate, the blindness of the people, and the malice of the priests, who were all personally concerned in the death of Christ. It is easy to think, that if we had seen his works and heard his words, we would not have joined with the multitude in crying, Crucify him: though, it is to be feared, many, who thus flatter themselves, have little less enmity against his person and doctrine, than his actual murderers. On this account, I shall give a detail of the true reasons why Christ was opposed in the flesh, and of the measures employed against him, in order to show that the same grounds of opposition are deeply rooted in the fallen human nature; and how probable it is, that if he was to appear again in the same obscure manner, in any country now called by his name, he would meet

* Matt. xxiii. 29, 30.

with little better treatment, unless when the constitution and laws of a civil government might interpose to prevent it.

But it may be proper, in the first place, briefly to delineate the characters of the sects or parties mentioned by the evangelists, whose leaders, jointly and separately, both from common and distinct motives, opposed our Saviour's ministry, and cavilled at his doctrine. These* were the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Herodians.

The Pharisees, including the Scribes (who were chiefly of this sect), were professedly the guardians of the law, and public teachers of the people. They were held in high veneration, by the common people, for the austerity of their deportment, the frequency of their devotions, and their exactness in the less essential parts of the law. They observed the traditions of the elders, were still adding to them; and the consequence was (as it will always be in such a case), that they were so pleased with their own inventions, as to prefer them to the positive commands of God; and their studious punctuality in trifles withdrew their regard from the most important duties. Their specious show of piety was a fair outside, under which the grossest abominations were concealed and indulged. They were full of pride, and a high conceit of their own goodness. They fasted and prayed, to be seen and esteemed of men. They expected reverence and homage from all, and challenged the highest titles of respect, to be saluted as doctors and masters, and to be honoured with the principal seats in all assemblies. Many of them made their solemn exterior a cloak for extortion and oppression; and the rest, if not hypocrites in the very worst

* See Matt. xxiii.; Mark, vii. 13.; Luke, xviii. 9—14.

sense, yet deceived both themselves and others by a form of godliness, when they were, in effect, enslaved by their passions, and lived according to the corrupt rule of their own imaginations.

The Sadducees, their antagonists and rivals, were equally, though differently, remote from the true knowledge and worship of God. They not only rejected the tradition of the elders, but a great part of the Scriptures likewise, and admitted only the five books of Moses as of divine authority. From this circumstance, together with the difficulty * they proposed to our Lord, and the answer he gave them; it appears that they were persons who, professing, in general terms, to acknowledge a revelation from God, yet made their own prejudices and mistakes, under the dignified name of *reason*, the standard to determine what books should be received as authentic, and in what sense they should be understood. The doctrine of a resurrection did not accord with their notions; therefore they rejected it, together † with those parts of Scripture which asserted it most expressly. Their question concerning the seven brethren, seems to have been a trite objection, which they had often made, and which had never been answered to satisfaction, till our Lord resolved it. But the whole difficulty was founded upon false principles, and when these were removed, all fell to the ground at once. From this, however, we

* Matt. xxii. 23.; Acts, xxiii. 8.

† That the Sadducees received only the law of Moses, is the general opinion; though I do not say that it has been either indubitably proved, or universally held. That they put their own sense upon the Scriptures (whether in whole or in part) which they did profess to receive, is manifest, from their asserting, that there is no resurrection, neither angel nor spirit; a tenet which contradicts not one or a few texts, but the whole strain and tenour both of the law and the prophets.

may learn their characteristic. They were the cautious reasoners of those times, who valued themselves on examining every thing closely, refusing to be influenced by the plausible sounds of antiquity and authority.

The Herodians * were those who endeavoured to ingratiate themselves with Herod. It is most probable that they received their name and distinction, not so much from any peculiar sentiments, as from attempting to accommodate their religion to the circumstances of the times. The Pharisees, boasting of their privileges as the children of Abraham, could hardly brook a foreign yoke; but the Herodians, from motives of interest, were advocates for Herod and the Roman power. Thus they were opposite to the Pharisees in political matters, as the Sadducees were in points of doctrine. And therefore the question concerning tribute, was proposed to our Lord jointly by the Pharisees and Herodians: the former designing to render him obnoxious to the people, if he allowed of tribute; the latter to accuse him to the government, if he refused it.

From what has been said, it is evident the leading principles of these sects were not peculiar to themselves. They may rather be considered universally, as specimens of the different appearances a religious profession assumes, where the heart is not divinely enlightened and converted to the love of the truth. In all such persons, however high the pretence of religion may be carried, it cannot proceed from a nobler principle, or aim at a nobler object than *self*. These dispositions have appeared in every age and form of the Christian church, and are always active to oppose the self-

* Matt. xxii. 16.; Mark, iii. 6.

denying doctrines of the Gospel upon different pretences. The man who, fond of his fancied attainments and scrupulous exactness in externals, despises all who will not conform to his rules, and challenges peculiar respect on account of his superior goodness, is a proud Pharisee. His zeal is dark, envious, and bitter; his obedience partial and self-willed; and, while he boasts of the knowledge of God, his heart rises with enmity at the grace of the Gospel, which he boldly charges with opening a door to licentiousness. The modern Sadducee (like those of old) admits of a revelation, but then, full of his own wisdom and importance, he arraigns even the revelation he seems to allow at the bar of his narrow judgment; and as the sublime doctrines of truth pass under his review, he affixes, without hesitation, the epithets of absurd, inconsistent, and blasphemous, to whatever thwarts his pride, prejudice, and ignorance. And those parts of Scripture which cannot be warped to speak his sense, he discards from his canon as interpolated and supposititious. The Herodian is the man, however denominated or dignified, who is governed by interest, as the others by pride, and vainly endeavours to reconcile the incompatible services of God and the world, Christ and Belial. He avoids the excesses of religious parties, speaks in terms of moderation, and is not unwilling to be accounted the patron and friend of sobriety and religion. He stands fair with all who would be religious upon cheap terms, and fair in his own esteem, having numbers and authority on his side. Thus he almost persuades himself he has carried his point, and that it is not so impossible to serve two masters, as our Lord's words seem to import. But the preaching of the pure Gospel, which enforces the one thing needful, and will admit of no

compliances with worldly interests, interferes with *his* plans, and incurs *his* resentment likewise; though, perhaps, he will shew his displeasure, by more refined and specious methods than the clamorous rage of hot bigotry has patience to wait for.

We now proceed. The first great cause why Jesus was rejected by those to whom he appealed, may be deduced from the tenour of his doctrine, a summary of which has been given in the former chapter. It offended the pride of the Pharisees, was repugnant to the wise infidelity of the Sadducees, and condemned the pliant temper of the Herodians. The doctrines of free grace, faith, and spiritual obedience, were diametrically opposite to their inclinations. They must have parted with all they admired and loved if they had complied with him; but this is a sacrifice too great for any to make, who had not deeply felt and known their need of a Saviour. These, on the contrary, were the whole, who saw no want of a physician, and therefore treated his offers with contempt.

Besides, their dislike to his doctrine was increased by his manner of enforcing it. He spoke with authority, and sharply rebuked the hypocrisy, ignorance, ambition, and avarice of those persons who were accounted the wise and the good, who sat in Moses's chair, and had hitherto been heard and obeyed with reverence. But Jesus exposed their true characters; he spoke of them as blind guides; he* compared them to "painted sepul-

* Matt. xxiii. 27. Nothing is more loathsome to our senses than a corpse in a state of putrefaction, or a more striking contrast to the outside of a sumptuous ornamented monument. Perhaps the visible creation does not afford any other image that would so strongly express the true character of hypocrisy, and how hateful it appears in the sight of God, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and before whom all things are naked and open.

dines," and cautioned the people against them as dangerous deceivers. It is no wonder, therefore, that on this account they hated him with a perfect hatred.

Again: They were exceedingly offended with the high character he assumed as the Son of God, and the Messiah. On this account they condemned him to die for blasphemy. They expected a Messiah indeed, who, they professed, was spoken of in the Scripture; but they understood not what the Scriptures had revealed, either concerning his divine nature, or his voluntary humiliation; that he was to be the son and lord of David, yet "a man "of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." They denied his divinity; and themselves unwittingly fulfilled the prophecies that spoke of his sufferings: affording by their conduct a memorable proof how fatally persons may mistake the sense of the word of God, while they profess highly to esteem it.

What farther increased their contempt of his claims, and contributed to harden their hearts more implacably against him, was the obscurity and poverty of his state. While they were governed by worldly wisdom, and sought not the teaching of God's Spirit, they could not but suppose an utter repugnance between the meanness of his condition, and the honours he vindicated to himself. They expected a Messiah to come in pomp and power, to deliver them from the Roman yoke. For a person truly divine, who made himself equal with God, to be encompassed with poverty and distress, seemed such profane contradiction as might justify every mark of indignity they could offer him. And this difficulty must equally affect every unenlightened mind. If *man* had been left to devise in what manner the Lord of the universe would probably descend to dwell a while with poor mor-

tals in a visible form, they would undoubtedly have imagined such a scene (if their thoughts could have reached it) as is described by the prophets on other occasions; the heavens bowing, the earth shaking, the mountains ready to start from their places, and all nature labouring to do homage to her Creator. Or, if he came in a milder way, they would, at least, have contrived an assemblage of all that we conceive magnificent; a pomp and splendour surpassing all the world ever saw. Expecting nations, crowding to welcome his arrival, and thrones of gold, and palaces of ivory, would have been judged too mean to accommodate so glorious a guest. But the Lord's thoughts and ways are different from man's. The beloved Son of God, by whom all things were made, was born in a stable, and grew up in an obscure and mean condition. He came to suffer and to die for sin, to sanctify poverty and affliction to his people, to set a perfect example of patience and submission; therefore he made himself of no reputation, but took on him the form and offices of a servant. This was the appointment of divine wisdom; but so incredible in the judgement of blinded mortals, that the apostle assures us "no man can say that Jesus is "the Lord;" can perceive and acknowledge his inherent excellence and authority, through the disgraceful circumstances of his humiliation, "but by "the Holy Ghost."* His enemies therefore thought they sufficiently refuted his assertions, by referring to his supposed parents, and the reputed place of his nativity.

Their envy and hatred were still more inflamed, by observing the character of his followers. These were chiefly poor and illiterate persons, and many

* 1 Cor. xii. 3.

of them had been notoriously wicked, or accounted so; publicans and sinners, whose names and professions were vile to a proverb. And for such as these, and almost these only, to acknowledge the person whom they refused, and by professing themselves his disciples,* to set up for being wiser than their teachers; this was a mortification to their pride which they could not bear; especially when they found their number daily to increase, and therefore could not but fear their own influence would proportionably decline.

Once more: Mistaking the nature of his kingdom, which he often spoke of, they opposed him from reasons of state; they feared, or pretended to fear, that if they suffered him to go on, the increase of his disciples would give umbrage to the Romans, who would come and take away both their place and their nation.† Some, perhaps, really had this apprehension; but it was more generally a pretence, which the leaders made use of to alarm the ignorant. They were, in truth, impatient of the Roman yoke, prone to tumults, and ready to listen to every deceiver who promised them deliverance, under pretence of being their expected Messiah. But, from enmity and opposition to Jesus, they became loyal at once. So they might accomplish their designs against him, they were content to forget other grievances, and openly professed they would have no other king but Cæsar.

These were some of the chief motives which united the opposite interests and jarring sentiments of the Jewish sects against our blessed Lord. We are next to consider the methods they employed to prejudice the multitudes against him. The

* John, vii. 49.; ix. 34. † John, xi. 48.

bulk of the common people seldom think for themselves in religious concerns, but judge it sufficient to give up their understandings and consciences to their professed* teachers. They are, however, for the most part, more unprejudiced and open to conviction than their guides, whose reputation and interest are more nearly concerned to maintain every established error, and to stop up every avenue by which truth and reformation might enter. The Jewish people, uninfluenced by the proud and selfish views of the priests and rulers, readily honoured the ministry of Christ, and attended him in great nultitudes. If they did not enter into the grand design of his mission, they at least gave him testimonies of respect. When Jesus caused the† dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see, they glorified the God of Israel, saying, "A great prophet is risen "up amongst us, God has visited his people." Now, what was to be done in this case? Would the Scribes and Pharisees stand unconcerned? No; it is said in several places, they were filled with indignation,‡ and essayed every means to bring his person and miracles into disrepute. The methods they used are worthy of notice, having been often repeated since (as to their substance) against the servants of Christ.

1. They availed themselves of a popular mis-

* This is much to be lamented; for "if the blind lead the "blind, shall they not both fall into the ditch?" Matt. xv. 14. When the blind lead the blind, how, indeed, can it be otherwise; if the former imagine they *see*, and the latter are content to be *led*? Alas, for the people that are in such a case! Alas, for their guides!

† Matt. xv. 31.; Luke, vii. 16.

‡ It is a strong symptom of hypocrisy and enmity to the Gospel, to be offended with any new and remarkable displays of divine grace.

take concerning his birth. Jesus was born in Bethlehem, according to the Scriptures; but being removed from thence in his infancy, to avoid Herod's cruelty, and his parents afterwards living at Nazareth in Galilee, he was supposed by many to have been born there. Even Nathanael was prejudiced by this mistake; but happily yielded to Philip's advice to examine for himself. But it prevented many from inquiring much about Jesus, and therefore his enemies made the most of it, and confidently appealed to the Scripture, when it seemed to decide in their favour. * "Search and look, for out of Galilee ariseth no "prophet." It is probable, many were staggered with this objection, and thought it sufficient to invalidate all his discourses and miracles, since, let him say and do what he would, he could not be the Messiah if he was born in Galilee.

2. They urged, that he could not be of God, because he infringed the law of Moses, and broke the sabbath.† This, though it may seem a groundless objection to us, was not so to many at that time, who knew not the spiritual design and meaning of the law, and, perhaps, had not the opportunity to hear our Lord vindicate himself. They urged this vehemently against the force of a notorious miracle, and not without some colour from the words of Moses‡ himself, who had warned them to beware of false teachers, though they should confirm their doctrine by signs and wonders.

3. They reproached the freedom of his conversation. Jesus was of easy access, and condescended to converse and eat with any who invited him. He neither practised nor enjoined the

* John, vii. 42. 52. † John, ix. 16. ‡ Deut. xiii. 1, 2, 3.

austerities, which carry the air of superior sanctity in the judgment of weak and superstitious minds. They therefore styled him "a glutton* and wine-"bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners;" that is (as they intended it), a companion with them, and a conniver at their wickedness. Nothing could be more false and slanderous than this charge, nor more easily refuted, if the people would examine closely. But as it came from teachers who were highly reverenced for mortification, and as Jesus was usually attended by many with whom it was thought infamous to associate, it could not but have great weight with the credulous and indolent.

4. They laid much stress upon the mean condition of his followers. They were mostly Galileans, a people of small estimation, and of the lowest rank, fishermen or publicans; while, on the other hand, few or none of the rulers or Pharisees, who were presumed to be best qualified† to judge of his pretensions, had believed on him. Those who are acquainted with human nature, cannot but know how strongly this appeal to the judgment of persons eminent for their learning or station, operates upon minds who have no better criterion of truth. How could a Jew, who had been from his infancy superstitiously attached to the Pharisees, suppose that these eminently devout men, who spent their lives in the study of the law, would have rejected Jesus, if he had been a good man?

5. When, notwithstanding all their surmises, multitudes still professed high thoughts of Jesus, beholding his wonderful works; they proceeded, with the most blasphemous effrontery, to defame

* Luke, vii. 34. † John, vii. 48.

the miracles they could not deny, and maliciously ascribed them to the agency of the devil.* This pertinacious resistance to the conviction both of their senses and consciences, was the highest stage of impiety, and constituted their sin (as our Lord assured them) unpardonable. Not that any sin, considered in itself, is too great for the blood of Jesus to expiate; but, as they utterly renounced and scorned his mediation, there remained no other sacrifice, but they were judicially given up to incurable impenitence and hardness of heart. Yet it is probable, that even this black assertion was not without influence upon some who were wedded to their sins, and therefore glad of any pretext, how unreasonable soever, to refuse the testimony of truth.

6. Another means they made use of (the last we shall enumerate), and not the least effectual, to intimidate the minds of the people from acknowledging Jesus, was the convincing argument of violence and ill treatment. Having the power in their hands, they employed it against his followers, and made an agreement, that whoever confessed he was Christ, should be put out of the synagogue,† that is, *excommunicated.* This decree seems to have been made by the Sanhedrim, or great council, and to imply, not merely an exclusion from the rites of public worship, but likewise a positive punishment, equivalent to an *outlawry* with us. The fear of incurring this penalty restrained the parents of the man born blind, and prevented many others,‡ who were in their hearts convinced that he was the Messiah, from owning him as such. They loved the world, they

* Matt. xii. 24. † John, ix. 22. ‡ John, xii. 42.

preferred the praise of men to the praise of God, and therefore remained silent and neuter.

From such motives, and by such methods, our Lord was resisted and opposed by the heads of the Jewish nation. The scribes and teachers, to whom the key of knowledge was by authority committed, disdained to use it themselves, and those who were willing they hindered. Had they been wise and faithful, they would have directed the people to Christ; but, on the contrary, they darkened the plainest Scriptures, and perverted the clearest facts, to prevent, if possible, his reception. In vain "he spoke as never man spoke," and multiplied the wonders of his power and love in their presence. In vain to them. They pursued him with unwearied subtilty* and malice; traduced him to the people and to the government, and would be satisfied with nothing less than his death. So obstinate and wicked is the heart of man; so fatal are the prejudices of pride and worldly interest. For, as we observed before, these tempers were not peculiar to the Jews; they are essential to depraved nature, and operate universally, where the grace of God does not make a difference. To this hour the Gospel of Christ is opposed upon the same grounds, and by the like artifices, as were once employed against his person.

The doctrines which his faithful ministers deduce and enforce from the written word are no other than what he himself taught, namely, a declaration of his personal honours and authority, of the in-

* Mark, xii. 13. They sent unto him certain of the Pharisees *to catch him.* Αγρευω expresses the art and assiduity of sportsmen, in the various methods they use to ensnare, entangle, or destroy their game. It well suits the spirit and design of our Lord's enemies in the question proposed, and is finely contrasted by the meekness and wisdom of his answer.

sufficiency of formal worship, in which the heart is not concerned, of the extent and spirituality of the law of God, and of salvation, freely proclaimed to the miserable, through faith in his name. The self-righteous, the self-wise, and all who are devoted to the pleasures and honours of the world, have each their particular exceptions to these truths. The wisdom of God they account foolishness, and the language of their hearts is, "We will not have "this man to reign over us." And the success of these doctrines, which is chiefly visible among such as they have been accustomed to despise, is equally offensive; yet so inconsistent are they, that if, here and there, a few persons, who were before eminent for their rank, attainments, or morality, are prevailed on to "account all things but "loss and dung for the excellency of the know-"ledge of Christ Jesus their Lord;" this, instead of removing their first objection, excites their rage and contempt still more.

And as the motives of their hatred, so their methods of expressing it, are the same. They are not ashamed to adopt and exaggerate the most vulgar misconceptions: they set the Scripture at variance with itself; and, while they pass over the plainest and most important passages unnoticed, they dwell upon a few texts of more dubious import, and therefore more easily accommodated to their sense; with these they flourish and triumph, and affect a high zeal in defence of the word of God. They reproach the pure Gospel as licentious, because it exposes the vanity of their singularities and will-worship; and are desirous to bind heavier burdens upon men's shoulders, which few of themselves will touch with one of their fingers. They enlarge on the weakness and ignorance of those who mostly receive the new

doctrine, and intrench themselves under the sanction of learned and dignified names. They even venture to explode and vilify the evident effects of God's grace, and ascribe the agency of his Spirit to enthusiasm, infatuation, and madness, if not expressly to diabolical influence. And, lastly, so far as Divine Providence permits, they show themselves actuated by the primitive spirit of oppression and violence, in pursuing the faithful followers of the truth with censures and penalties.

But let who will rage, and imagine vain things, Jesus is the King in Zion. He is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." There were a happy few in the days of his flesh who beheld his glory, trusted on him for salvation, and attended him amidst the many reproaches and sufferings he endured from sinners. Of these, his first witnesses, we are to speak in the following chapter. His Gospel likewise, though opposed by many, and slighted by more, is never preached in vain. To some, it will always be the power and wisdom of God; they know in whom they have believed, and therefore are not ashamed to appear in his cause against all disadvantages. Supported and encouraged by his Spirit, they go on from strength to strength, and are successively made more than conquerors, by his blood, and the word of his testimony.

CHAPTER IV.

Observations on the calling and characters of our Lord's Apostles and Disciples, previous to his Ascension.

FROM what has been observed in the preceding chapters, it is evident that those who assert a principle of free-will in man, sufficiently enabling him to choose and determine for himself when the truths of the Gospel are plainly laid before him, do thereby (so far as in them lies) render the salvation of mankind highly precarious, if not utterly hopeless and impracticable. Notwithstanding God was pleased to send his own Son with a gracious message; notwithstanding his whole life was a series of wonders, and all his actions discovered a wisdom, power, and goodness answerable to his high character; notwithstanding the time, manner, and design of his appearance and sufferings had been clearly foretold; yet, so far as a judgement can be made from the event, he would certainly have lived and died in vain, without influence or honour, without leaving a single disciple, if the same grace that provided the means of redemption had not engaged to make them effectual, by preparing and disposing the hearts of sinners to receive him.

In the account given us by the evangelists of those who professed themselves his disciples, we may discern, as in miniature, the general methods of his grace; and, comparing his personal ministry with the effects of his Gospel in all succeeding times, we may be assured that the work and the power are still the same. The choice he made of his disciples, the manner of their calling, their characters, and even their defects and failings, in

a word, all that is recorded concerning them, is written for our instruction, and is particularly useful, to teach us the true meaning of what passes within our own observation.

First. Several things are worthy our notice in this view, with respect to the *choice* of his disciples.

1. They were comparatively very few. He was, indeed, usually attended by multitudes in the different places where he preached, because he spoke with a power they had never met with before, and because he healed the sick, fed the hungry, and did good to all; but he had very few constant followers. Those who assembled at Jerusalem, after his ascension, are said to have been but about one hundred and twenty;* and when he appointed his disciples a solemn meeting in Galilee, informing them before-hand of the time and place where he would come to them, the number that then met here is expressed by the apostle to have been more than† five hundred. We can hardly suppose that any who loved him, and were able to travel, would have been absent upon so interesting an occasion; but how small a company was this, compared with the many thousands among whom he had conversed in all the cities and villages through which he had passed, preaching the Gospel, and performing innumerable miracles, for more than three years! Well might the prophet say, foreseeing the small

* Acts, i. 15.

† 1 Cor. xv. 6. The word *brethren* there used does not prove that none but men were present at that time, any more than that, because the Apostles, in their public preaching, addressed their hearers as "men and brethren," there were therefore no women amongst them, or the women were not considered as having any interest or concern in the Gospel Ministry.

success he would meet with, "Who hath believed "our report, and to whom hath the arm of the "Lord been revealed?" But since he, in whom the fulness of grace resided, had so few disciples, it may lessen our surprise, that his Gospel, though in itself the power and wisdom of God, should meet with so cold a reception amongst men as it has in fact always done.

2. Of those few who professed a more entire attachment to his person, a considerable part, after attending him for some time, went back and walked no more with him. They were but superficially convinced, and rather struck with the power of his words and works, than deeply sensible of their own need of him. When, therefore, upon a certain occasion, he spoke of the more inward and experimental part of religion, the life of faith, and the necessity of eating his flesh and drinking his blood, so many were offended at his doctrine, and forsook *him, that he said unto the twelve, "Will ye also go away?" which seems to imply that there were few but these remaining. Therefore, though we see at present that, where the sound of the Gospel brings multitudes together, many, who for a season appeared in earnest, gradually decline in their profession, and, at length, wholly return to their former ways, we have the less reason to wonder or be discouraged, remembering that it was thus from the beginning.

3. Those who believed on Christ then, were chiefly (as we had occasion to observe before) persons of low condition, and many of them had been formerly vile and obnoxious in their conduct. While the wise and learned rejected him, his more immediate followers were Galileans, fishermen,

* John, vi. 66, 67.

publicans, and sinners. This was observed, and urged to his reproach and theirs: and the like offence has always attended his Gospel. But what enrages his enemies, fills the hearts and mouths of his poor people with praise. They* adore his condescension in taking notice of the most unworthy, and admire the efficacy of his grace in making those who were once wretched slaves to Satan, a free and willing people in the day of his power.

4. But this was not universally the case. Though not many wise, rich, or noble, were called, there were some even of these. His grace triumphed over every circumstance of life. Zaccheus was a rich man;† Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews; Joseph, an honourable counsellor. We also read of a nobleman or courtier who believed, with all his house. In every age, likewise, there have been some persons of distinguished eminence for birth, honours, and abilities, who have cheerfully engaged in the profession of a despised Gospel, though they have thereby incurred a double share of opposition from the men of the world, especially from those of their own rank. The number of these has been always sufficient to confute those who would insinuate, that the Gospel is only suited to the taste of the vulgar and ignorant; yet it has always been so small, as to make it evident that the truth is not supported by

* Luke, i. 52, 53.

† Zaccheus was a chief or principal publican, to whom the rest were accountable; a commissioner of the revenue. "And "he was rich." The Greek is more expressive, "And this was "a rich man;" Luke, xix. 2.: perhaps alluding to what had past a little before; chap. xviii. 25. This remark is added, to remind us, that what is impossible with men, is easy to him who can speak to the heart, and turn it as he will.

the wisdom or influence of men, but by the power and providence of God.

5. It is farther observable, that several of our Lord's few disciples were under previous connexions amongst themselves. Peter * and Andrew were brothers, as likewise James and John; and these, together with Philip, and, perhaps, Nathanael, seem to have been all of one † town. The other James and Jude were also brethren. So it is said, Jesus loved Mary, and her sister, and Lazarus, three in one house; when, perhaps, the whole place hardly afforded a fourth; and more in a single village than were to be found in many larger cities taken together. This circumstance more strongly marked the discrimination of his grace, in making the means effectual where, and to whom, he pleased. Such has been the usual event of his Gospel since. It is proclaimed to all, but accepted by few; and of these several are often found in one family, while their next-door neighbours account it a burden and offence. It flourishes here and there ‡ in a few places, while those of the adjacent country are buried in more than Egyptian darkness, and resist the endeavours of those who would invite them to partake of the

* John, i. 40.

† Comp. Mark, i. 16. Luke, v. 10, with John, i. 44, 45. These six, and more than these, were fishermen, John, xxi. 2.; and such they continued; only their net, success, and capture, were so much changed, that it became a new calling: he made them fishers of men. In the fisherman's calling, there is required a certain dexterity, much patience, and a readiness to bear hardships. Perhaps many observations they made in their former business were useful to them afterwards. And the Lord still brings up his servants so, that the remembrance of former years (the years of ignorance) becomes a rule and encouragement in future and different scenes of life.

‡ Amos, iv. 7.

same benefits. Thus the Lord is pleased to display his own sovereignty, in raising and sending forth his ministers when and where he sees fit, and in determining the subjects and measure of their success. If others dispute and * cavil against this procedure, those who believe have cause to adore his goodness to themselves; and a day is at hand, when every mouth shall be stopped that would contend with the just Judge of all the earth. The impenitent and unbelieving will not then dare to charge him with injustice, for dealing with them according to their own counsels and desires, inasmuch as when the light of truth was ready to break upon them, they chose darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

Secondly. In the *calling* of our Lord's disciples, and the manner in which they were brought to know and serve him, we may discover the same variety as, at this day, appears in the conversion of sinners by the preaching of the Gospel.

Some, from a religious education, and early acquaintance with the Scriptures, and the secret influence of the Spirit of God upon their hearts,

* See Rom. xi. 23. There are but few who dispute upon the subject of the Divine Decrees with that reverence and caution St. Paul expresses. In chap. ix., when an objection was started, he cuts it short with, "But who art thou, O man, that repliest "against God?" And here he breaks off abruptly, with, "O "the depth!" He seems to have followed the narrow winding streams of human reasoning, till he finds himself, unawares, upon the brink of an ocean that has neither bounds nor bottom. And every word expresses the reverence and astonishment with which his mind was filled. The wisdom of the divine counsels in their first plan; the knowledge of their extensive consequences in this world, in all worlds, in time, and in eternity; the riches of that wisdom and knowledge; the depth of those riches; his counsels inaccessible; his proceedings untraceable; all is wonderful in St. Paul's view. How different this from the trifling arrogant spirit of too many upon this topic!

are gradually prepared for the reception of the truth. They read, and strive, and pray; they feel an uneasiness and a want, which they know not how to remedy. They are sincerely desirous to know and do the will of God; and yet, through misapprehension, and the influence of popular prejudice, they are for a season withheld from the means that would relieve them. But, at length, the preaching of the Gospel explains to them the meaning of their former exercises, exactly answers to the state of their minds, and thereby brings its own evidence. Similar to this was the case of Nathanael: when our Lord referred him to what had passed under the fig-tree, where he had thought himself alone and unobserved, his doubts and scruples vanished in an instant. There is little doubt but Nathanael had been praying under the fig-tree, and probably desiring a farther knowledge of the prophecies, and their accomplishment in the Messiah. He had heard of Jesus, but could not fully clear up the objections made against him; but now he was convinced and satisfied in a moment.

The attention of some is drawn by what they see and hear around them. They form a favourable opinion of the Gospel from the remarkable effects it produces; but their first inquiries are damped by difficulties which they cannot get over, and they are ready to say, "How can these things "be?" Their interests and connexions in life are a farther hinderance; the fear of man, which bringeth a snare, is a great restraint upon their inquiries; but now and then, when they can venture without being noticed, they seek farther instruction. Now, though this hesitating spirit, which pays so much deference to worldly regards in the search of truth, is highly blameable; yet

the Lord, who is rich in mercy, is often pleased to produce a happy and abiding change from such imperfect beginnings. As they increase in knowledge they gain more courage, and, in time, arrive to a comfortable experience and open profession of the truth. Thus it was with Nicodemus; he was at first ignorant and fearful; but his interview with Jesus, by night, had a good effect. He afterwards ventured to speak more publicly* in his favour, though still he did not join himself to the disciples. But the circumstances of Christ's death freed him from all fear, and inspired him to attempt the most obnoxious service, when the apostles themselves were afraid to be seen.†

Others are first prompted to hear the Gospel from no higher motive than curiosity; but going as mere spectators, they find themselves retained as parties unawares. The word of God, powerful and penetrating as a two-edged sword, discovers the thoughts and intents of their hearts, presses upon their consciences, and seems addressed to themselves alone. The sentiments they carry away with them are far different from those they brought; and a change in their whole deportment immediately takes place. Such was the case of Zaccheus:‡ he had heard much of Jesus, and desired to see him; for this end he ran before, and climbed a tree, from whence he proposed to behold him unobserved. But how great must his surprise and emotion have been, when Jesus, whom he had considered as a stranger, looked up, called him by his name, and invited himself to his house.

Some are drawn by the report of others freely declaring what the Lord has done for their souls.

* John, vii. 50. † John, xix. 39. ‡ Luke, xix. 5.

The relation awakens in them desires after him which are not disappointed, for he is rich enough to satisfy all who seek to him. So the Samaritans, whose expectations were first raised by the woman's declaration, *"Come and see a man which "told me all things that ever I did; is not this the "Christ?" had soon a more convincing testimony, and could say, "Now we believe, not because of "thy word, but we have heard him ourselves, and "know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour "of the world."

To a few, the first impulses of divine grace come suddenly and unthought of, when their hearts and hands are engaged quite another way: as Saul, who was seeking his father's asses, received the unexpected news of a kingdom. A ray of truth pierces their minds like lightning, and disposes them to leave their schemes unfinished, to seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness only. †Thus our Lord passed by the sons of Zebedee when mending their nets, and ‡Matthew while busied at the receipt of custom. He only said, "Follow "me;" he used no arguments, he proposed no rewards; but he spoke to their hearts, and, by the constraining power of his love, engaged them to a cheerful and immediate obedience.

Afflictions likewise are now, no less than formerly, a happy means to bring many to Jesus. He prepares them for heavenly blessings by imbittering or removing their creature-comforts. Had they continued in prosperity, they would not have thought on him; but the loss of health, or friends, or substance, disappointments in life, or a near prospect of death, constrain them in good earnest

* John, iv. 29. 42. † Mark, i. 16—19. ‡ Mark, ii. 14.

to seek for one able to deliver them. In the time of their distress they say, Arise and save us. Not that afflictions in themselves can produce this turn of thought. Too many in such circumstances toss like a wild bull in a net; but when he sends afflictions for this purpose, they accomplish that which he pleases. Thus, when he was upon earth, many who came or were brought to * him for the relief of bodily disorders, experienced a double cure. †He healed their diseases, and pardoned their sins. At the same time that he restored the ‡blind to sight, he opened the eyes of their minds. He sometimes made the afflictions of one, the means to bring a whole family to the knowledge of his grace. A considerable part of his followers were such as these, whom he had graciously relieved from distresses incurable by any hand but his. Some had been long and grievously tormented, had essayed every means, but found themselves worse and worse till they applied to him; and having known the happy effects of his power and compassion, they would leave him no more.

Lastly, we sometimes meet with instances of his mercy and ability to save even to the uttermost, in the unhoped-for conversion of desperate and hardened sinners, who have gone on with a high hand, regardless of mercies, warnings, and judgements, till they seemed past conviction, and given up to a reprobate mind. Their state resembles that of the demoniac, Luke, viii. They are so entirely under the power of the devil (though perhaps they vainly boast of freedom) that no arguments, no motives, no resolutions, can restrain them within bounds; but they break through every tie of nature, conscience, and reason, and are restless

* Mark, ii. 9. † John, ix. 7—36—38. ‡ John, iv. 53.

drudges in the service of sin, though they feel themselves miserable at present, and see inevitable ruin before their eyes. Yet even this case is not too hard for him on whom the sinner's help is laid. He can dispossess the legion with a word, he can take the prey from the mighty, and deliver the lawful captive, bind the strong one armed, and divide his spoil. Happy change, when the power of grace not only sets the soul at liberty from sin and Satan, but puts it in possession of what were lately the instruments of its slavery! when all the powers and faculties of body and mind are redeemed to the Lord's use, and the experience of past evil is made conducive to future comfort and advantage! Such an instance was that great sinner, that penitent, believing, happy soul, of whom it is emphatically remarked,* "She loved much, "because much had been forgiven her." Sometimes the deliverance is deferred till near the period of life. The poor wretch, labouring under the pangs or dread of death, and trembling at the apprehension of falling into the hands of the living God, is snatched as a brand out of the fire; he receives faith in a suffering Saviour, and feels the power of atoning blood; his terrors cease, and joy succeeds, a joy unspeakable and full of glory. Thus the expiring malefactor † was converted upon the cross, and received an infallible assurance of salvation.

Thirdly. The *characters* of our Lord's disciples, with the account we have of their defects and failings, may farther illustrate the history of his church and Gospel, and afford an apology for the blemishes which, through human infirmity, do, more or less, attend the prevalence of his doctrines.

* Luke, vii. 47. † Luke, xxiii. 43.

The grace of God has a real influence upon the whole man. It enlightens the understanding, directs the will, purifies the affection, regulates the passions, and corrects the different excesses to which different persons are by constitution or habit inclined. Yet it seldom wholly changes the complexion or temper of the animal frame. It does not impart any new natural powers, though it teaches the use and improvement of those we have received. It will dispose us to seek instruction, make us open to conviction, and willing to part with our prejudices, so far and so soon as we discover them, but it will not totally and instantaneously remove them. Hence there are a great variety of characters in the Christian life; and the several graces of the Spirit, as zeal, love, meekness, faith, appear with peculiar advantage in different subjects; yet so, that every commendable property is subject to its particular inconvenience. Perfection cannot be found in fallen man. The best are sometimes blameable, and the wisest often mistaken. Warm and active tempers, though influenced, in the main, by the noble ambition of pleasing God in all things, are apt to overshoot themselves, and to discover a resentment and keenness of spirit, which cannot be wholly justified. Others, of a more fixed and sedate temper, though less subject to this extreme, are prone to its opposite; their gentleness degenerates into indolence, their caution into cowardice. The principle of self, likewise, which, though subdued, is not eradicated, will in some instances appear. Add to this, the unknown access and influence which the evil spirits have upon our minds; the sudden and new emergencies which surprise us into action before we have had time to deliberate, with many other considerations of a like nature; and it

will be no wonder that some things are always amiss,* in the best and most successful attempts to promote the glory of God and the good of souls. And it is farther to be noted, that some individuals will be found, who, though seemingly engaged in the same good work, and, for a time, pretending to much zeal, are essentially defective in their hearts and views; and when, at length, their true characters are exposed, the world, who either cannot or will not distinguish, charge the faults of a few upon a whole profession; as, in the former case, they wound the character of a good man for unavoidable and involuntary mistakes. We shall therefore shew, that either the exceptions made, and so loudly reverberated in our ears, against the Gospel doctrine, on these accounts, are unjust, or that there was sufficient cause to reject and condemn our Lord and his apostles for the same reasons.

The character of Peter is marked with admirable propriety and consistence by the evangelists. He every where appears like himself. Earnestly devoted to his Master's person, and breathing an honest warmth for his service, he was, in a manner, the eye, the hand, the mouth, of the apostles. He was the first to ask, to answer, to propose, and to execute. He made a noble confession, for which our Lord honoured him with a peculiar commendation. He waited but for a command to walk to him upon the water. He was not

* A lukewarm, cautious spirit, can easily avoid and readily censure the mistakes and faults of those, who, fired with an honest warmth for the honour of God and the good of souls, are sometimes transported beyond the bounds of strict prudence. But though the best intention cannot make that right which is wrong in itself, yet the zeal, diligence, and disinterested aim of such persons are worthy of our esteem.

afraid to expose himself in his Lord's defence, when he was surrounded and apprehended by his enemies; and though, in this last instance, his affection was ill-expressed, yet his motive was undoubtedly praiseworthy. His heart flamed with zeal and love, and therefore he was always forward to distinguish himself.

But the warmth of Peter's temper often betrayed him into great difficulties, and showed that the grace he had received was consistent with many imperfections. Though he sincerely loved Christ, and had forsaken all for him, he was, at one time, so ignorant of the true design of his incarnation, that he was angry and impatient to hear him speak of his sufferings, and brought upon himself a most severe rebuke. Not content with the ordinary services allotted to him, he offered himself to unnecessary trials, as in the above instance, when he pressed to walk upon the water. The event showed him his own weakness and insufficiency, yet his self-confidence revived and continued. When our Lord warned him again and again of his approaching fall, he thought, and boldly affirmed, that it was impossible. He was sincere in his protestation, but the actual experiment was necessary to convince and humble him; accordingly, when left to himself, he fell before the first temptation. And here the impetuosity of his temper was still manifest. He did not stop at a simple denial of Jesus, he confirmed it by an oath, * and, at length, proceeded to utter bitter imprecations against himself,

* Mark, xiv. 71. "He began to curse and swear." Αναθεματιζειν—to imprecate the most dreadful curses upon himself, and call solemnly on God to execute them. This was, indeed, the most probable method to free himself from the suspicion of being a disciple of Jesus, for no such language had been, till then, heard among his followers.

if he so much as knew him, whom he had seen transfigured in glory upon the mount, and prostrate in an agony in the garden. Such was the weakness and inconsistence of this prince of the apostles.

None of these excesses appeared in the conduct of the traitor Judas. He was so circumspect and reserved, that we do not find any of the disciples had the least suspicion of him. But whilst his heart was full of wickedness, he could find fault with others, and charge their best expressions of love with indiscretion. When Mary anointed our Lord's feet with ointment,* he was displeased at the waste, and professed a warm concern for the poor; but we are told the true reason of his economy: it was not because he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the bag, which contained the common stock, intrusted to him. The charge of the bag is an office full of temptation; and an attachment to the bag has been often at the bottom of many censures and misrepresentations which have been thrown out against the people of God. It has been, and it will be so; but the Lord has appointed, that wherever the Gospel should be preached to the end of the world, this action of Mary, with the observation of Judas upon it, and the motive from which he made it, should be handed down together, that we may not be discouraged at things of the same kind. Without doubt, the treason of Judas and his unhappy end, after having maintained a fair character so long, and shared with the rest in the honours of the apostleship, were to them an occasion of grief, and afforded their enemies a subject of reproach and triumph. But we may believe one reason why our Lord chose Judas, and continued him so long with his

* John, xii. 5, 6.

disciples, to have been that we might learn by this awful instance not to be surprised if some, who have made a show in the church, been chosen to important offices, and furnished with excellent gifts, do, in the end, prove hypocrites and traitors: "Let him that thinketh he standeth take "heed lest he fall."

A desire of pre-eminence and distinction is very unsuitable to the followers of Jesus, who made himself the servant of all; very unbecoming the best of the children of men, who owe their breath to the mercy of God, have nothing that they can call their own, and have been unfaithful in the improvement of every talent. We allow that every appearance of this is a blemish in the Christian character, and especially in a Christian minister; but if, on some occasion, and in some degree, human infirmity has wrought this way, though no example can justify it, yet those who, through ignorance of their own hearts, are too rigid censurers of others, may be reminded, that this evil frequently discovered itself in the apostles. They often disputed who should be the greatest; and when our Lord was speaking of his approaching sufferings, two of them chose that unseasonable time to preclude the rest, and petitioned that they might have the chief seats in his kingdom. The first offence was their's; but when the ten heard it, they were all moved with indignation, and shewed themselves equally desirous of superiority. It is plain, therefore, that, unless the apostles were hypocrites and mercenaries, some transient escapes of this sort (though confessedly criminal and indecent) are no sure proofs that such a person is not in the main sincere, disinterested, and truly devoted to the service of God and his Gospel.

No less contrary to the meek and gracious spirit of Jesus, is an angry zeal, expressing itself in terms of ill-will and bitterness to those who oppose or injure us. One of the highest attainments and brightest evidences of true grace, is, from a sense of the love and example of Christ, to show bowels of mercy and long-suffering to all men, and, by perseverance in well-doing, to overcome evil with good. And a contrary behaviour (if frequent and notorious) will, like a dead fly in precious ointment, destroy its savour, if not the efficacy, of all we can attempt for the service of God in the world. However, if repeated falsehoods and studied provocations do sometimes, in an unguarded moment, extort from the disciples of Christ such expressions and marks of displeasure, as in their cooler hours they willingly retract and sincerely repent of before God; this ought not to be exaggerated beyond bounds, as an offence inconsistent with their profession; at least, not by any who would be afraid to speak dishonourably of the apostles James and John, who once went so far in their anger * as to demand that fire might be sent from heaven to devour their adversaries.

We might proceed to other particulars; but

* Luke, ix. 54. They thought they were influenced by a commendable zeal for their Master, and that their proposal was warranted by an authorised precedent. We do not find that they ever wished for fire to consume the Scribes and Pharisees, who were Christ's most inveterate enemies. But when the Samaritans rejected him, the vile Samaritans, whom they, upon a national prejudice, had been accustomed to hate; then their hearts deceived them, and they indulged their own corrupt passions, while they supposed they were animated by a zeal for Christ. Are we not often deceived in the same way? Can we not silently bear, or ingenuously extenuate, the faults and mistakes of our own party, while we are all zeal and emotion, to expose, censure, and condemn what is amiss in others?

enough has been said, to show the general resemblance which the preaching of the Gospel in later times bears to our Lord's personal ministry. The doctrine is the same, the effects the same. It was, and it is, to many, "a stone of stumbling, and a "rock of offence." The opposition it has met with has been always owing to the same evil principles of pride and the love of sin, which are latent in every unrenewed heart: though the pretexts are various, they may be reduced to a few leading motives, which are always at work. The professors of this Gospel have at no time been very numerous, if compared with those who have rejected it; and of these, too many have dishonoured or forsaken it: neither have those who have received it most cordially, and been most desirous to adorn and promote it, been wholly exempt from mistakes and imperfections. The tenour of their conduct has proved them partakers of a more excellent spirit than others; their faith in Jesus has not been an empty notion, but fruitful of good works, such as no man could do except God was with him. They have been governed by higher motives, and devoted to nobler aims, than the world can either understand or bear; yet they are deeply conscious of inherent infirmity, and sometimes, to their great grief, they give too visible proofs of it; which their watchful adversaries are glad to aggravate, and charge upon them as consequences of their doctrine. This should induce all who love the Lord Jesus to redouble their guard, and to pray with David that they may be led in the right way, because of their observers. If the question is concerning the infirmities, or even the vices of others, almost every one is ready to plead in their behalf; allowances are freely and largely made for human frailty, and none are will-

ing to be thought harsh or censorious. But the believer in Jesus must look for no abatement or extenuation; even the professed admirers of candour and charity will not hesitate to put the worst construction upon all he says or does; for they are seeking occasion to wound the Gospel through his misconduct. They are sensible that he is generally above them, and therefore rejoice to find, or pretend a flaw, on which they may expatiate, to reduce him as near as possible to their own level. Though, if their censures are extended to their just consequence, they will (as we have seen) fall hard upon the apostles themselves.

I hope that what I have said upon this subject will neither be misunderstood nor perverted. We do not defend even the infirmities of the best men; much less would we provide a plea for persecution or ambition. Let not the man who supposes gain to be godliness, who makes the Gospel a ladder whereby to climb the heights of worldly preferment, whose heart, like the insatiable fire, is craving more, and practising every art to accumulate wealth and honour in the church;—let not the proud man, who would lord it over conscience, and, though unable to command fire from heaven, would gladly prepare fire and slaughter upon earth for all who will not venture their souls upon his faith;—let not these avail themselves of the examples of James and John: but rather let them tremble at the reflection, that, while they manifest no part of the apostles' graces, they are entirely possessed of those tempers, the smallest traces of which our Lord so severely rebuked in his disciples.

The first believers, though not faultless, were sincere. The natural disposition of their hearts was changed; they believed in Jesus, they loved

him, they devoted themselves to his service, they submitted to his instructions, shared in his reproach, and could not be either enticed or intimidated to leave him. Their gracious Master was their guide and guard, their advocate and counsellor; when they were in want, in danger, in trouble, or in doubt, they applied to him, and found relief; hence they learned, by degrees, to cast all their care upon him. He corrected every wrong disposition; he pardoned their failings, and enabled them to do better. His precepts taught them true wisdom; and his own example, which, to those who loved him, had the force of a thousand precepts, was at once the model and the motive of their obedience. To make them ashamed of aspiring to be chief, he himself, though Lord of all, conversed among them as a servant, and condescended to wash their feet. To teach them forbearance and gentleness to their opposers, they saw him weep over his bitterest enemies, and heard him pray for his actual murderers.

Thus they gradually advanced in faith, love, and holiness, as the experience of every day disclosed to them some new discovery of the treasures of wisdom, grace, and power, residing in their Lord and Saviour. He explained to them in private the difficulties which occurred in his more public discourses; by his observations on the common occurrences of life, he opened to them the mysterious volumes of creation and providence, which none but those whom he vouchsafes to teach can understand aright; he prayed for them, and with them, and taught them to pray for themselves; he revealed unto them the unseen realities of the eternal world, and supported them under the prospect of approaching trials: particularly of his departure from them, by assuring

them that he was going on their behalf, to prepare them a place in his kingdom, and that, in a little time, he would return to receive them to himself, that they might dwell with him for ever.

What he personally spoke to them, and acted in their presence, was recorded by his direction, and has been preserved by his providence for the use and comfort of his church: though his enemies have raged horribly, they have not been able to suppress the divine volume; and, though invisible to mortal eyes, he is still near to all that seek him, and so supplies the want of his bodily presence by the secret communications of his spirit, that his people haveno reason to complain of any disadvantage. Though they see him not, they believe, love, rejoice, and obey; their attention and dependence are fixed upon him; they intrust him with all their concerns; they rely upon his promises; they behold him as their high priest, advocate, and shepherd; they live upon his fulness, and plead his righteousness, and they find and feel that their reliance is not in vain.

The disciples were content, for his sake, to bear the scorn and injurious treatment of the world; they expected no better usage, nor desired a higher honour, than to be fellow-sufferers with their Lord. When he proposed returning to Judea, at a time they thought dangerous, and they could not alter his purpose, they did not wish to be left behind; "Let us go," says one of them to the rest, "that we may die with him." It is true, when he was actually apprehended, the first shock of the trial was too strong; they forsook him, and fled. He permitted this, both to exempt them from danger, and to let them know, that of themselves they could do nothing. But, it seems, they did not go far. When Thomas afterwards said,

"Except I shall see in his hands the print of the "nails, and put my finger into the print of the "nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will "not believe," he spoke like one who had been an eye-witness to his sufferings, and expresses an earnestness, as if he still saw him wounded and bleeding. This catastrophe, indeed, almost disconcerted them; they had trusted it was he that should deliver Israel; but they saw him oppressed and slain by wicked men. From that time to his resurrection was a mournful interval, the darkest and most distressing period his church ever knew.

But the third day dispelled their grief; he returned victorious from the grave, proclaimed peace by the blood of the cross; he declared (and his appearance proved it) that the ransom was paid and accepted, and that, having now overcome the sharpness of death, he had opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers. Then he spoke peace to their hearts, he opened their understandings to know the Scriptures, and breathed upon them his Holy Spirit; he conversed frequently with them during forty days, gave them a large commission to preach his Gospel, and an invaluable promise of his presence with them to the end of the world.

When he had thus confirmed them by those instructions and assurances which his wisdom saw necessary, he was received up to heaven. They followed him with their hearts and eyes a while, and then returned to Jerusalem rejoicing. They were not ashamed of their crucified Lord, or unwilling to bear the contemptuous names of Galileans or Nazarenes for his sake. They were not afraid, as if left like sheep without a shepherd in the midst of their enemies. They knew that, though they could see him no more, his eye would be always upon them, and his ear open to their

prayer. They waited, according to his command, for a farther supply of his Spirit, to qualify them for the important and difficult services which were before them. Nor did they wait long: a few days after his ascension, while they were praying with one heart and mind, the place where they were assembled was shaken as with a mighty wind; the Spirit of power and wisdom was abundantly communicated to them: they spoke with new tongues, and immediately began to preach boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus.

With this solemn and memorable event, I shall open the second book, and take up the thread of the Gospel History from that glorious day of Divine Power. The contents of this first book, namely, a brief view of the necessity and nature of the Gospel dispensation, the causes why it is and has been opposed, and the circumstances of the first believers, I have premised, as general principles, for my own and the reader's assistance in the progress of this work.

It is much to be wished, that every reader might be impressed with the importance of our subject. It is not a point of curiosity, but of universal concern, and that in the highest and most interesting sense. Most of the researches and disquisitions, which employ the time and talents of men, are of a trivial or indifferent nature. We may range on different sides concerning them; we may give, or refuse, or retract our assent, when and as often as we please. We may be totally ignorant of them without loss, or be skilled in them all without deriving any solid comfort or advantage from them. But the Gospel of Christ is not like the dry uninteresting theories of human wisdom; it will either wound or heal, be a savour of life or of death, a source of endless

comfort, or the occasion of aggravated condemnation to all that hear of it. To receive it, is to receive the earnest and assurance of eternal happiness; to reject it, or remain wilfully ignorant of its characters and properties, will leave the soul oppressed with guilt, and exposed to the wrath of God for ever. It highly concerns us, therefore, to inquire, whether we believe the Gospel or no; whether what we call the Gospel, is the same that Christ and his apostles taught, and whether it has had the same or similar effects upon our hearts. We live where the Gospel is generally professed, and we are reputed Christians from our cradles; but the word of God cautions us to take heed lest we be deceived. We see Christianity divided into innumerable sects and parties, each supported by names, arguments, and books, and fighting for the credit of a denomination. But how many forget, that, in a little time, all these divisions and subdivisions will be reduced to two; the only real and proper distribution by which mankind (as to their religious character) ever was or will be distinguished, and according to which their final states will be speedily decided,—*the children of God,* and *the children of the wicked one.*

BOOK II.

OF THE SECOND PERIOD OF CHRISTIANITY.

That I may neither encumber the series of the history with too many digressions, nor deprive myself of the opportunity of making such observations as the subject will suggest conducive to our main design, I propose, in the first chapter of this and the succeeding book, to give a succinct view of the progress and state of Christianity during each period; and then, by way of appendix, to add one or more chapters (as may be necessary) on such particulars as are of more immediate application to the circumstances of our own times.

CHAPTER I.

Of the Progress of the Gospel from our Lord's Ascension to the close of the first Century.

The natural weakness of man is conspicuous in his most important undertakings: having no fund of sufficiency in himself, he is forced to collect all from without; and if the greatness of his preparations are not answerable to the extent of his designs, he has little hopes of success. Farther: when he has planned and provided to the utmost of his power, he is still subject to innumerable contingences, which he can neither foresee nor prevent; and has often the mortification to see his fairest prospects blasted, and the whole apparatus of his labour and care only contribute to make his disappointment more conspicuous and painful.

The reverse of this is the character of the wonder-working God. To his power every thing is easy; he knows how to employ every creature and contingence as a means to accomplish his designs; not a seeming difficulty can intervene but by his permission, and he only permits it to illustrate his own wisdom and agency in making it subservient to his will. Thus, having all hearts and events in his hands, he fulfils his own counsels with the utmost ease and certainty; and, to show that the work is his own, he often proceeds by such methods as vain men account weak and insignificant, producing the most extensive and glorious consequences from small and inconsiderable beginnings. Thus the Lord of hosts hath purposed to stain the pride of all human glory.

This observation might be confirmed by innumerable examples, taken from the common history and experience of mankind; but the subject of our present undertaking exhibits the most illustrious proof. When the Jews had seen Jesus crucified, dead and buried, they expected to hear no more of him. His disciples were few, men of no authority, learning, or influence; and since their Master, who had made them such large promises, was at last unable to save himself from death, it was probably expected that his followers would disperse of course, forsake their supposed delusion, and return to their fishing, and other employments suited to their capacities and talents.

They knew not that Jesus had arisen from the dead, and had frequently shown himself to his servants to comfort and confirm their hearts. They little thought that he, whom they had seen expire on the cross, was immovably seated at the right hand of God, possessed of all power in heaven and earth; but his disciples knew this, and therefore continued to assemble in his name. We do not find that there was much notice taken of them till the feast of Pentecost, which was about ten days after his ascension. At this season,* by the Jewish law, the first-fruits of the earth were presented at the temple: an appointment, typical of those more sublime first-fruits of spiritual gifts and graces with which the Lord on this day enriched his disciples (according to his promise), enabling them to preach his Gospel, and make his word effectual to the conversion of a large multitude; as an earnest of that divine power by which he would

* Tiberius, A. D. 33. In fixing the dates of our history, I shall conform to what I think the most probable and authorized opinion, without perplexing either myself or my readers with the niceties of critical chronology.

support and extend his church and ministry to the end of the world.

When the hearts of God's people are united in love, and pleading his promises in the fervent exercise of faith and prayer, great things may be expected. Such was the happy state of his disciples on this solemn day. They were assembled with one accord; no jars or divisions had as yet taken place among them: they were animated with one desire, and praying with one mind; suddenly and wonderfully they obtained an answer; the place they were in was shaken as by a mighty wind;* their hearts were filled with the powerful energy of the Holy Spirit, and they were instantaneously enabled to speak languages which till then they were unacquainted with. These inward powers were accompanied with the visible symbols of fiery tongues, which sat upon each of their heads: a fit emblem both of the new faculties they had received, and of the conquering, assimilating efficacy of the Spirit by whom they spoke; whose operations, like the fire, are vehement, penetrating, transforming, and diffusive, spreading from heart to heart, from place to place, till the flame, which was now confined within a few breasts, was communicated to many nations, people, and languages.

The effects of this divine communication were immediately manifest: they were filled with love, joy, and faith, and began boldly and publicly to praise God. Their emotion and zeal could not be long unnoticed: those who first observed it spoke of it to others, and a rumour was spread abroad. Jerusalem was at that time the occasional resort of the Jews and Jewish proselytes,

* Acts, ii.

who were dispersed throughout the known world, and multitudes had come from different countries to celebrate the feast. The promiscuous throng, who assembled upon the report, and had been accustomed to different languages, were therefore greatly astonished to hear of the wonderful works of God, every man in his own tongue. While some expressed their surprise at this, others ascribed it to the effects of wine, and showed their scorn and despite to the Spirit of grace, by reviling the apostles as drunkards. Thus they no sooner entered upon their public service, than they began to find the same treatment which their Lord had met with, and were, for his sake, the subjects of calumny and derision. This is a remarkable instance of the sagacity and temper which the men of the world discover in the judgment they form of a work of God; nor is it probable that our modern reasoners would have judged more favourably, if they could have been present at such a scene, where several persons were speaking loud at the same time, and each in a different language: since they account the operations of the same Spirit, madness and folly, even where they are not attended with such extraordinary circumstances.

This weak and perverse slander was immediately refuted by the apostle Peter, who addressed the people in a grave and solemn discourse: and having, in few words, explained the nature of the fact, and shown that it was an accomplishment of ancient prophecies, he proceeded to apply himself more closely to their consciences. He assured them, that what they saw and heard was wrought by the power of Jesus of Nazareth, whom they had rejected before Pilate. He informed them of that honour and glory which he now possessed, and charged them as accomplices in the

murder of a person whose character and dignity God had vindicated, by raising him from the dead. Though our Saviour had but few disciples during his personal ministry, he had doubtless left a deep impression of his words and works in the hearts of many. This discourse of Peter would naturally recal him to the remembrance of those who had seen him in the flesh, and lead them to reflect how earnestly and unjustly they had, at the instigation of their priests, compelled Pilate to put him to death. These reflections, the closeness of Peter's address, and the power of the Spirit of God, concurred to give them a deep conviction of their sin. They were pierced to the heart. They no longer wondered as curious spectators; but were solicitous for themselves, and cried out, "Brethren, "what shall we do?" Peter then proceeded to open the treasure of Gospel grace, and to direct them to Jesus, whom they had crucified, for salvation. The effect of this day's preaching (for though only Peter is named, it is probable there were more than one preacher or one discourse) was signally happy. Three thousand souls were converted, and, professing their faith and repentance, were, by baptism, publicly joined to the church.

A farther addition was soon after made. Peter and John* having recovered a man from incurable lameness, by faith in the name of Jesus, the report of the miracle brought a great concourse of people together a second time. Peter improved the occasion to preach to them at the temple gate, to the purport of his former discourse. He had an attentive auditory; and his word was made effectual to the conversion of many. By this time the enemies

* Acts, iii.

of Jesus were greatly alarmed at the progress of his doctrine; and having * notice of what had passed, the priests and Sadducees violently apprehended Peter, with John, and put them in prison. He had not finished his discourse, but he had said enough to be remembered; and this interruption, with the boldness of his following defence, made his words more regarded. The next day they were brought before the high priest, rulers, and elders; and being asked concerning the late miracle, Peter, who once had trembled at the voice of a girl, was not afraid to use the utmost freedom and plainness with the council and heads of the Jewish nation. He confessed the name and cause of Jesus; reminded them of their wickedness, in causing him to be crucified, and, in direct answer to their question, assured them that the miracle was wrought in his name, and by his power. Though the council were highly offended with this language, and the more so, as they observed the persons who spoke were private and unlettered men; yet, being unable to deny the fact (for the man who had been lame stood before them), and unwilling to incur the odium of punishing an action they were ashamed to disapprove, they dissembled their rage, and, forbidding the apostles to speak any more to the people, they dismissed them: yet they did not depart until they had protested against this inhi-

* Acts, iv. 16, 17. Many consultations have been held, and devices framed, to stop the progress of the Gospel, as if it was a dangerous infection; but all such attempts are vain. They may as easily restrain the dawning of the day as suppress the spreading of the Gospel, when the Lord is pleased to raise up fit instruments to promote it, and to vouchsafe a season of refreshment from his presence. Then its influence cannot be restrained, a spark becomes a flame, a little one a multitude, and opposition only makes the effects more visible and noticed.

bition, and declared their resolution to obey God rather than man.

The believers, though numerous, amounting to many thousands, lived in harmony and love, as children of one family. The greater part of them were poor; those, therefore, who had estates or money, willingly put their all into a common stock, for the use of the whole, which was entrusted to the care of the apostles. This is recorded as an instance of the benevolent and disinterested spirit with which the Gospel inspired them; but is not enjoined as a precedent to be universally observed, since we have many proofs that the usual distinctions in civil life were retained in other churches planted by the apostles; and it soon gave occasion to discover, that in the best societies there may be found some unworthy intruders, and that very specious actions may be performed from base and dishonourable motives. Even under this richest dispensation of grace, there were some professors influenced by no higher motives than hypocrisy and vain glory. * Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, attempted to impose on the apostles by a concerted lie, and would have had the praise of giving their whole substance, when their avarice would only permit them to spare a part. As a warning to all pretenders who seek to join or serve the church from sordid and selfish views, Peter, by the direction of the Holy Ghost, denounced a severe sentence against this unhappy pair, and they both fell dead† at his feet. The cause and suddenness of their death was a vindication of the apostle's integrity and authority, and a seasonable admoni-

* Acts, v.

† The apostolic censures were not like the papal anathemas, *bruta fulmina*, words without effect; they were accomplished in an instant. See Acts, xiii. 11.

tion to others, to deter any from attempting to associate with the disciples who were not in heart devoted to the Lord.

The numbers of the believers still increased, and the report of the apostles' doctrine and miracles extended from Jerusalem to the adjacent parts. The priests and Sadducees, therefore, soon renewed their efforts to suppress them: they apprehended the apostles again, and put them in the common prison as malefactors; but the Lord, to confirm the faith and courage of his people, and to show how easily he can protect those who serve him, delivered them the same night by his angel. In the morning, when their enemies were met, and commanded them to be brought to the tribunal, they were surprised to hear that the prison doors were found secure, and the prisoners all escaped. They were, however, soon informed that they were not gone far, but were preaching boldly to the people (as the angel had directed them), regardless of their adversaries' designs against them. They were alarmed at this notice, and began to be apprehensive of the event;* yet, hurried on by their enmity to Jesus and his Gospel, they once more sent their officers to take them, which they attempted in the mildest manner possible; for, as the prosecution was groundless and malicious, they were not without fear lest the multitude should interpose; but they had to do with the followers of Jesus, who would countenance no tumult in their own favour, and were neither afraid nor ashamed to confess his name in the face of danger. The apostles, therefore, peaceably

* Acts, v. 24. It is not only a fruitless, but a very uneasy undertaking, to fight against the truth and those who profess it. The boldest and wisest champions in this desperate cause are often brought to their wits' end, and to foresee their own disappointment.

yielded themselves, and, being brought before the council, were severely questioned for disregarding the late prohibition they had received. Peter and the rest answered with their usual firmness; they avowed the fact, and their determination to persevere,* and charged them as the betrayers and murderers of Jesus in stronger terms than before. The majority of the council were exceedingly enraged at their boldness; they were cut to the heart, and consulted to put them to death. But the more moderate advice of Gamaliel prevailed: he showed them, from some recent instances, that if this new sect was no more than a human institution, they need not give themselves trouble to suppress it, for it would soon sink and disappear of itself; but if it was indeed of God, their opposition would be not only in vain, but, in effect, a rebellion against God himself: he therefore recommended milder methods, and, having considerable repute among them for his wisdom, the rest assented to him. In this manner the Lord, who has the hearts of all in his power, delivered the apostles a third time, by raising them an advocate from amongst their enemies; yet, to save appearances, and that it might not be thought the council had proceeded so far without good cause, they were not dismissed till they had been scourged, and again enjoined si-

* Peter and the apostles answered, "We ought to obey God "rather than men." It should seem that this (if any) may be called a natural maxim, and that the rudest savage, or the least child, that can be made to understand the terms, must assent to the truth of the proposition as readily as they perceive that *two and two* make four. How strange then is it, that men of the greatest parts and penetration in other things so seldom receive it! There are few periods to be found, even in the Christian church, in which those who steadily acted upon this principle were not considered as heretics of the worst sort.

lence. They departed, rejoicing that they had the honour to suffer disgrace * for the sake of Christ, and returned to encourage their companions; continuing still publicly, and from house to house, to teach and preach in the name of Jesus.

† These were happy times, when the whole company of the faithful were of one heart and mind, firmly united in affection, sentiment, ordinance, and practice. Their adversaries, though angry, and desirous to injure them, were powerfully restrained by the Divine Providence; so that they enjoyed peace in the midst of war, and were favoured with much grace in their hearts, and a daily increase in their numbers. Yet it was not long before an occasion arose which might have had unhappy effects, if the wisdom and authority of the apostles had not provided an early remedy. The church, as yet, consisted only of Jewish believers; but these were distinguished into Jews properly so called, that is, natives and inhabitants of Judea; and Hellenists or Grecians, the name given to those of the Jewish race and profession who had been dispersed and settled in the heathen countries. Many of these, as has been observed, were at that time in Jerusalem,

* Here were faith and love in exercise: to suffer reproach for Christ, was, in their esteem, an honour and privilege. It is mournful to observe how little of this spirit is to be found amongst us. How soon are we offended and troubled when our names are reproached; how uneasy to lie under contempt; how impatient to justify ourselves, and to be thought well of by all persons! Far from accounting it an honour to be made conformable to Jesus in this respect, we feel it a burden which we are restless to shake off; yet it must be borne, or we must give up profession and all; for neither are our characters more respectable than the first Christians, nor is the world better reconciled to the things of God now than it was then.

† Acts, vi.

and among the first converts to the Gospel. As the multitude who were supplied out of the common stock were very great, it is no wonder if a few individuals were overlooked. Some unavoidable instances of this sort gave rise to a complaint, not only of negligence, but partiality in the distribution of the money; and the Hellenists, or strangers, thought the others had an undue preference shown them. The apostles, though upright and impartial, were unable to do every thing themselves, and therefore, to prevent such mistakes and suspicions, and that they might devote their whole time and attention to the more important services of the ministry, they entirely divested themselves of the pecuniary charge; and, by their advice, seven men were chosen, on whom, by prayer and imposition of hands, they solemnly devolved this trust. Thus the office of deacons was instituted: they were men full of wisdom and the Holy Ghost, and to them the care of the public money, and the support of the poor, was peculiarly confided. Some of them, perhaps all, were occasionally preachers: but this was no part of their office as deacons. By this expedient the cause of murmuring was taken away, and the peace of the church confirmed.

TIBERIUS, A. D. 34.] Thus the Gospel flourished in defiance of opposition. The Jews, provoked more and more, began to lose all patience; the mild counsels of Gamaliel could no longer restrain them, but their blinded passions hurried them to the last extremities. Stephen, one of the seven deacons newly elected, was the first who received the honour and crown of martyrdom. His zeal for the truth did not begin with his new office, though it is possible his undertaking that charge might place him more in view, and expose him

more immediately to persecution. Promotions in the world are attended with worldly advantages: but such promotions in the church as are agreeable to the Spirit of God will rather entitle a man to a larger share of labours and sufferings, and the painful pre-eminence of standing in the fore-front of the battle, to sustain the hottest brunt of every storm. Stephen was no sooner a public person, than he became the mark of public opposition. At first, they pretended to dispute with him; but when they were unable to resist the wisdom and spirit by which he spake, they had recourse to more effectual methods to silence him; they suborned false witnesses (a main instrument of persecution) against him, and, having framed such an accusation as was most likely to alarm the prejudice and inflame the rage of the people, they brought him before the council, and charged him that he had spoken blasphemous words against Moses and against God. Stephen, though alone, and unsupported, in the midst of furious enemies, appeared firm and unmoved as a rock in the midst of waves; he was not only devoid of fear, but filled with joy;* the testimony of a good conscience, the honour of suffering for his Lord, and a sense of the love of God shed abroad in his heart, not only preserved his soul in peace, but spread a lustre and glory upon his countenance; so that all who sat in the council, looking upon him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel. In such a disposition, he thought it not worth while to attempt his own defence, but employed the whole time allotted him in behalf of his adversaries, that, if possible, by a distinct review of God's dealing with their nation, and their

* Acts, vii.

behaviour towards him, he might engage them to consider their ways, to repent, and believe the Gospel. While he spake of the things that had been long since transacted, and kept within the bounds of Moses, David, and Solomon, they had patience to hear him; but when he began to make application to themselves, with that warmth and plainness which the case required, they could hear no more; his words cut them to the heart; they no longer preserved the exterior gravity of their stations and characters, but gnashed at him with their teeth, as though they would have devoured him alive.

But vain are the attempts of men to intimidate those whom the Lord is pleased to comfort; he is always near, to support his faithful servants, and can manifest himself in a way which the world knows nothing of. Such a seasonable and sufficient discovery he made of himself to Stephen. As he looked steadfastly up to heaven, silently appealing from the injustice of his judges, he saw the heavens opened, and Jesus standing in glory at the right hand of God, as attending to all that passed, and ready to receive him to himself. Transported with this divine assurance, he was not at leisure to drop a single word to soften his incensed enemies: he endeavoured to communicate the glorious idea with which his soul was filled, and without regarding the sure consequences of such a declaration, he told them plainly what he saw. This determined their resolves. Hitherto they had been willing to preserve the form, at least, of a judicial process; but now, renouncing every restraint, and unmindful of their late acknowledgement to Pilate, that it was not lawful for them to put any man to death, they stopped their ears, to shut out any remonstrance that might be offered, dragged him

bition, in the strongest light, and proved him an entire stranger to the grace of God. From him the hateful practice of merchandising in spiritual concerns has derived the name of Simony; a crime which, though condemned by the laws of every Christian country as highly injurious and* reproachful to the Gospel of Christ, no laws or obligations have hitherto been able to suppress. Peter severely rebuked his hypocrisy, yet exhorted him to repentance and prayer. His words seemed to have some weight with Simon for the present; but we hear no more of him among the believers: on the contrary, he is recorded in history as an inveterate enemy to the faith and purity of the Gospel, and the author of those wild, absurd, and impure heresies which disturbed the first ages of the church.

About this time, an eunuch, or great officer, of Candace, queen of Ethiopia, who had been worshipping at Jerusalem (which makes it probable that he was a proselyte to the faith of the God of Israel), was returning homeward. Though this nobleman had been at Jerusalem, he had either not heard of the apostles and their new doctrines, or, being influenced by the priests and rulers, had not thought them worthy his notice. He was going home ignorant as he came; but the Lord,

* In these abuses the church of Rome seems to derive rather from Simon Magus than from Simon Peter; yet it is to be wished such practices were confined to the church of Rome only. Our laws have guarded against them by a very solemn and circumstantial oath; but that this oath, if not literally broken, is often scandalously evaded, we need no other proof than the shameful advertisements which frequently appear in our public papers: not to say that though there is no money in the case, yet all presentations, exchanges, and advancements, that are transacted upon interested views, are so far simoniacal in the sight of him who judges the heart.

who is mindful of his people when they think not of him, appoints the time and the means of bringing them to the knowledge of the truth; and these are often seemingly precarious and contingent, that the work may more clearly be known to be his, and the praise ascribed to his power and providence. Philip, by the direction of an angel, intercepted the Ethiopian upon the road. He found him well employed, reading the prophet Isaiah, as he sat in his chariot: he had a very confused idea of the passage he was reading; but he knew it contained an important meaning, and was desirous to discover it. Those who have a just sense of the excellence of the Scripture, and peruse it, as he did, with a sincere intention to be instructed by it, may be encouraged, from this instance, to persevere, though they find it at present hard to be understood: he who gave them the desire, will, in due time, provide them a teacher, and make dark things plain to them. When Philip drew near, and asked him, without ceremony, if he understood what he read, he was not offended with the abruptness of his address, but courteously invited him to sit with him, confessing his ignorance, and the need he had of assistance. The passage which had perplexed him afforded Philip a fair opportunity of preaching Jesus: the eunuch believed, and was baptized in a water they were passing by. In this case there seems to have been no exertion of an outward miracle to confirm the word, nor was it necessary; the manner of Philip's meeting with him, the suitableness of the question to the dubious state of his mind, and the discovery he obtained, that the prophetical marks of the Messiah exactly coincided with the history of Jesus, afforded him sufficient evidence. The only extraordinary circumstance was the sudden disappear-

ing of Philip, who, having performed his service, was removed by the Spirit to Azotus, a place thirty miles distant; from whence proceeding along the sea-coast, he preached at Joppa, Lydia, and all the intermediate places, till he came to Cesarea. In the mean time the eunuch, rejoicing in the Lord's goodness, pursued his journey to Ethiopia. We have no farther account of him in the New Testament; but some ancient writers assure us, that he was the means of propagating the faith which he had received, first in his own country, and afterwards in places still more remote.

TIBERIUS, A. D. 35.] The church having suffered much from the violence of the persecution, the Lord was pleased to afford them intermission, and to give a remarkable* proof of the power of his grace, by the conversion of Saul, one of their fiercest opposers. He had been educated a Pharisee, in a zealous attachment to the law, and, from a mistaken principle of conscience, thought it his duty to suppress the followers of Jesus. The warmth of his temper prompted him to uncommon earnestness against them: and as he was a young man, he was probably farther instigated by a desire to ingratiate himself with the Jewish rulers. Not content with the mischief he had done at Jerusalem, he still breathed out threatenings and slaughter against them, and meditated their destruction, even in distant places. With this view, he obtained letters of authority from the chief priests, and set out for Damascus, that, if he found any disciples there, he might bring them bound with him to Jerusalem. Little was he aware of the event of his journey! Little did the believers imagine that the man who now thirsted for their blood would soon be their

* Acts, ix.

companion and leader! The Lord often permits those to whom he shows mercy to run great previous lengths in their obstinacy and ignorance; their subsequent change is hereby more noticed: the riches of his grace are more remarkably exemplified for the encouragement of others; and such persons, from a lively sense of their past wickedness, and the undeserved favour they have received, are usually more strongly impressed with a sense of divine love, and more warmly devoted to his service. Some such there have been in every period of the church, and especially whenever there has been a remarkable revival of the power of godliness. When Saul was drawing near to Damascus, perhaps within sight of the city, anticipating his bloody designs, and exulting in thought over the defenceless sheep of Christ, whom he had been taught to consider as schismatics and heretics, who deserved to be extirpated from the face of the earth, he was suddenly surrounded by a glorious light, exceeding the brightness of the mid-day sun, and heard a voice, not of uncertain application, but expostulating with him, by name, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" If he was alarmed at the question, he was much more so, when, upon asking, "Who art thou, Lord?" he was answered, "I am Jesus the * Nazarene, whom "thou persecutest." So nearly is the Lord interested in his people, and so dangerous is it to injure them: he accounts their cause, their sufferings, their enemies, his own. The Nazarene was an epithet of contempt affixed to the name of Jesus by those who hated † him; and it is probable that Saul had often spoke of him in these terms: but

* This is the exact import of the Greek, Ιησους ὁ Ναζωραιος, Acts, xxii. 8.

† And for this reason inserted in the title which Pilate put over his cross.

now he found himself in the Nazarene's power, and unable either to escape or to plead; he fell to the earth, trembling and astonished beyond expression; he not only heard his voice, but saw his person*; an interview which he could not have sustained a moment, if the glory of Jesus had not been tempered with the milder beams of grace and love. The Lord spared him, accepted his feeble surrender of himself, moderated his fears, and dismissed him to Damascus, as a willing trophy of his victorious grace, and a singular instance how easily he can subdue the hardest hearts to himself. The brightness of the vision had overpowered his bodily eyes, so that he was led by the hand; but the eyes of his mind were opened; his heart, his aims were changed; he was become a new man; and, instead of threatenings and slaughter, he now breathed prayer and devotion to Jesus, and love to his people. He remained at Damascus three days without sight or food; but the Lord remembered his distress, and sent to him a disciple, named Ananias, who, from the character he had heard of him, was at first greatly surprised at the command he received to go to such a person; but the Lord condescended to acquaint him that Saul was a chosen instrument, whom he had appointed to do and suffer great things for his sake. When Ananias laid his hands on him, a thick film, resembling scales, fell from his eyes; his sight was restored, his mind composed, and he was immediately baptized. Saul had several companions with him in his journey, who saw the dazzling light, heard the sound of the voice which spoke to him, and fell to the ground, with surprise, as he did; they knew enough of the circumstances of the case to witness for

* Acts, ix. 27.; 1 Cor. xv. 9.

him, that he neither imposed upon others nor himself: but we have no account that any of them were converted; the most extraordinary occurrences being insufficient to change the heart, without the interposition of Divine grace.

Thus the late persecuting Saul was numbered with the disciples, and soon distinguished himself among them. He now knew, by experience, the wickedness and danger of opposing the Gospel, and was desirous to repair the mischief of his former rage and ill example. A sense of the mercy he had received, and compassion for the souls of others, made him seek every opportunity to persuade and convince the Jews, his former companions and brethren; but he soon found the same treatment from them which he himself had often offered to the disciples. They opposed and vilified him as an apostate, and at length consulted to kill him: his former zeal in their cause was forgot, or, if remembered, it was an argument suited to inflame their resentment. But no counsel can prevail against those whom the Lord protects. Saul had timely notice of their designs, and, because they watched the gates of the city incessantly, he was let down by a basket * over the wall; for, though he neither distrusted his cause nor his protector, he was not unmindful to employ prudent means for his preservation. But before this, he had made some excursions from Damascus, and visited Arabia; for his own words assure us, that

* 2 Cor. xi. 33. "Through a window, in a basket, was I "let down by the wall." The Lord often confounds the pride of his enemies by the manner in which he delivers his servants: he permits violent oppositions and great preparations to be made against them, and then disconcerts the combinations of the *many* and the mighty by feeble and unthought-of means.

it was not till the third year after his conversion that he returned to Jerusalem. In this interval the Lord, who had appeared to him in the way, by subsequent revelations, fully instructed him in the knowledge of his will, and qualified him for the apostolical office; so that he could afterwards say, that he received neither his authority nor his information from men. When he came to Jerusalem he would have joined himself to the disciples; but they, remembering his former conduct, and not clearly informed of the manner and reality of his change, were at first afraid of him. They had a right to be satisfied of his sincerity. But, being soon afterwards introduced by Barnabas, he related to them the means of his conversion, and the occasion of his leaving Damascus. He continued for some time in Jerusalem and the neighbourhood, preaching and disputing in the name of the Lord Jesus. The Jews, who hated all the servants of Christ, could not but be particularly enraged at him, who had forsaken their party: against him, therefore, they chiefly set themselves, and making repeated attempts to kill him, he withdrew again from Judea, and went through Syria to Tarsus, in Cilicia, his native place.

CALIGULA, A. D. 38.] * Upon his recess, the churches in Judea, Samaria, and Galilee, had an

* The churches had rest, and walked in the fear of the Lord and the comforts of the Holy Ghost, and were edified and multiplied; Acts, ix. 31. Some well-meaning persons seem to forget this passage, when they take it for granted that the work of God cannot flourish, except there is a violent outward opposition against it. The world will dislike the Gospel; but it is possible, in some measure, to put to silence the ignorance of foolish men by well-doing; and the Lord can, and often does, favour his people with peace, and put their enemies under restraint.

interval of rest. The Jews about this time were taken up with their own affairs. Caligula, who had lately succeeded Tiberius in the empire, presumed to arrogate divine worship to himself, and commanded altars and temples to be erected to his honour. He was readily obeyed in many places; but when he required his statue to be put up in the temple at Jerusalem, the Jewish nation engaged, as * one man, to prevent it. They had rejected the Holy One and the True, and the troubles were now beginning to take place, which ended at length in their total ruin and extirpation. Against this first affront and profanation intended to their temple, they united in earnest supplications to Petronius, the governor of Syria, and, with much entreaty, obtained permission to send their deputies to the emperor, who was, though with great difficulty, prevailed on to desist from his purpose as to the temple: but, at the same time, he forbade them, under the severest penalties, to oppose the erection or dedication of temples to him in any place without the city of Jerusalem. This injunction encouraged their enemies to affront their religion wherever they pleased, and laid a foundation for innumerable disturbances and dissensions, in which the Jews, whether aggressors or not, were always the greatest sufferers. While they were thus distracted among themselves, the believers enjoyed a favourable respite; and, walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comforts of the Holy Ghost, were edified and increased.

A. D. 39.] As Peter had formerly seconded the labours of Philip the deacon at Samaria, he now visited those places where he had preached on his way to Cæsarea, and strengthened the disciples

* Josephus de Bell. Jud. lib. ii.

he found there by his doctrine and miracles. At Lydda* he restored a man to immediate health, who had been many years ill of a dropsy. Being afterwards invited to Joppa, he raised Tabitha, or Dorcas, to life, to the great joy of the poor and the widows, whom she had assisted by her alms and labours. While he made some stay here, his commission was enlarged, and he received direction from the Lord to communicate the Gospel to the Gentiles, which had hitherto been restrained to the Jews, except in the case of the eunuch, for which Philip had been authorized by the express command of an angel.

When our Lord sent forth the apostles to preach, while he was yet upon earth, he expressly confined their mission to the house of Israel; and though, after his resurrection, he commanded them to disciple all nations, they did not immediately understand the extent of his meaning. Though they were under an infallible guidance, they were not fully instructed at once; but received intimations of their duty from time to time, as circumstances varied, and as the designs of Divine Providence were successively opening. The great Shepherd and Head of the church has an appointed time and manner for the accomplishment of all his

* Acts, ix. 32. "He came to the saints at Lydda." The Scripture does not use the word *saint* in the narrow and appropriate sense of some, or with that improper extent which others have given to it in after-times; it is neither peculiar to apostles and fathers, nor applicable to all who bear it in the Roman calendar; but it is the common appellation of all who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and are saved from sin and condemnation by his grace. There have been saints in all ages; but real saints (while living) have usually been branded with opprobrious names. The world, which knows not Christ, cannot distinguish his people; but will rather give the title of saints to many who have hated and persecuted the Gospel.

purposes: nothing can be effectually done, but when and where he pleases; but when his hour is come, then hard things become easy, and crooked things straight; his word, Spirit, and providence then will all concur to make the path of duty plain to those who serve him; though, perhaps, till this knowledge is necessary, he permits them to remain ignorant of what he has designed them for. By this discipline they are taught to depend entirely upon him, and are afterwards more fully assured that he has sent and succeeded them. Peter was not yet freed from the Jewish prejudice, that all intercourse with the Heathens was unlawful; or if he had been so himself, he could not have easily convinced the many thousands of his brethren who laboured under the same mistake. This service was therefore pointed out to him, by means which left no room for doubt in his own mind, and enabled him fully to vindicate his conduct to others.

*Cornelius, a Roman centurion, or captain, with his family and dependants, were the first fruits of the Gentile converts. He lived at Cæsarea, a city not far from Joppa, and which was the ordinary residence of the Roman governors, and therefore promiscuously inhabited by Gentiles and Jews. It is not probable that he had never heard of Christ, or the new institution that was spreading under his name; but, without doubt, what he knew of it was only from public rumour, in which the misrepresentations of malice, and the surmises of ignorance, usually so far prevail, that persons of the best dispositions are often deterred from making those inquiries which the importance of truth deserves. But the Lord, whom he knew not, had been gradually preparing him for the reception of

* Acts, x.

the Gospel. He was already reclaimed from idolatry; he was a devout worshipper of God, exemplary in his family, just in his dealings, and charitable to the poor. How few of those now called Christians can equal his character, while a stranger to the Gospel, we may collect from daily observation. Yet those who plead for the sufficiency of what they style natural religion, would do well to observe, that though he was in many respects a good man, and his sincerity was approved by God himself, yet he lacked one thing. But none who are made sincerely desirous to know the will of God shall be left finally destitute; he will find a way to give them necessary information. Cornelius, who had often waited upon God by fasting and prayer, and had, doubtless, at times, felt that suspense and anxiety which can only be entirely removed by a clear knowledge of the Gospel covenant, obtained at length an illustrious answer: an angel appeared to him, assured him that his prayer was heard, and directed him to send for Peter, who should inform him more fully of his duty.

It is observable, that though the angel was so minutely exact in his directions, as to mention the street, and the very house where Peter resided, he said not a word of the Gospel to Cornelius, but referred him wholly to Peter. The wisdom and goodness of God is pleased to make his people instrumental in teaching each other. This not only secures the honour of the success to him alone, but it conduces to their comfort and advantage. An angel could only speak historically, *that the thing is* so; but it comes nearer to our level when delivered by men who have been in the very case of others, and can say, experimentally, *that they have found it* so. Who so fit to commend the physician's skill and tenderness as those who have

been themselves cured by him of a desperate disease? Peter had himself tasted that the Lord was gracious; he had greatly sinned, yet had been freely forgiven; he had seen his excellent glory upon the mount, and had received an express commission from his mouth. In these, and other respects, he was a proper person to proclaim him to others, more so than an angel from heaven. We may therefore safely infer, *à fortiori*, that no *man*, however great his talents may otherwise be, can be qualified, or fit to preach the Gospel, until he has known the evil of sin himself, and been a partaker of the pardoning grace of God, through a crucified Redeemer.

Cornelius was not disobedient to the heavenly vision. His example and instructions had been a blessing to his household; so that he had servants about him to whom he could communicate this extraordinary event, and depend on their fidelity. Having related his vision to them, he sent them to Joppa, to invite Peter to his house.

When they departed from Cæsarea, Peter was under the influence of the national prejudice, which would hardly have permitted him to have gone with them: but while they were on the journey, the Lord prepared his mind to comply. The time was now* come, when it was necessary he should know the extensive designs of God in favour of sinners of all nations, people, and languages; and that the partition-wall between Jews and Gentiles was broken down, and taken away, by the death

* In the Lord's dispensations in favour of his people, there is often a counterpart, resembling that which is related in this chapter. The minds of two or more persons are inclined, by different means, to concur in the same design, though, perhaps, they are far asunder, and know nothing of each other's intentions: in time, circumstances fall out which connect their views, and prove that the who ‹was from the Lord.

of Christ. He received this intimation by a vision, which exactly corresponded in its circumstances with the case in hand. About noon, the following day, when the messengers were near to Joppa, he was retired to the top of the house, for the convenient exercise of secret prayer; and, having an appetite for food, he saw, as it were, a large sheet, or wrapper, let down from heaven, suspended by the four corners, containing all sorts of beasts, birds, and reptiles, without any regard to the ceremonial distinction of clean and unclean: this appearance was accompanied with a voice, directing him to slay and eat. When he answered, that he had never yet transgressed the law, by eating unclean food; the voice replied, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common or unclean. To impress the whole upon his mind, and to convince him that the vision was real and significant, it was repeated three times. When it was finally withdrawn, and while he was thinking * what it might import, the men sent by Cornelius were inquiring for him at the door below; of which, receiving previous notice by the secret suggestion of the Spirit of God, and being directed to go with them without hesitation, he went down and spoke to them, before they had time to send him word of their arrival by the people of the house. When he had heard their business, and compared the vision of Cornelius

* Peter was faithful to the light he had already received, and did not hastily follow the first impulse upon his mind: though the liberty seemed to be authorized by a voice from heaven, he did not accept it without consideration. His example should be considered by those who give themselves up to the influence of every sudden impression, without taking time to consider its nature and tendency, and how far it is consistent with the revealed will of God.

with his own, he scrupled no longer; but lodging the strangers that night, he accompanied them the next day, taking with him five of the brethren from Joppa, to be witnesses of what the Lord intended to do. Cornelius, who earnestly expected his arrival, had assembled his friends and dependants against his coming: he received Peter before them all with the greatest respect and cordiality, and gave him a particular account of what had past, professing that both he and his friends were ready to receive and obey his instructions. Peter now perceived, and acknowledged, the great truth the Lord had pointed out by so many harmonizing circumstances; that the blessings of the Gospel were no longer confined to the Jews; but that Jesus was appointed "to be a light "to enlighten the * Gentiles" also. In his discourse to them, he declared the person, character,

* Acts, x. 34. Few passages of Scripture seem to have been more misunderstood and misrepresented than this and the following verse. As some have presumed, that St. Paul's doctrine of justification is corrected, if not confuted, by St. James; so the apostle Peter has been supposed to contradict both St. Paul and himself (see 1 Peter, i. 1, 2.) in another important truth of the Gospel. This mistake is more excusable in those who do not understand the original; but those who do, ought not to avail themselves of an ambiguous word. The Greek προσωπος from whence προσωπωλημπτης is derived, does not convey the same idea that an English reader receives from the word *person*; it does not properly signify a personal identity, but the outward appearance and circumstance of a person or thing. Thus it is sometimes rendered *face*, as Matt. vi. 16. and many other places, and is applied to the sky or air, Matt. xvi. 3.; *countenance*, Luke, ix. 29.; *presence*, 2 Cor. x. 1.; *fashion*, James, i. 11. The meaning here is the same as in Coloss. iii. 25. The Lord is not moved by the outward distinctions and differences amongst men, to which we often pay regard. (Compare 1 Sam. xvi. 7.) He neither receives nor rejects any for being Jew or Gentile, rich or poor, bond or free, male or female, but is rich in mercy to all who call upon him.

and offices of Jesus, who had been lately crucified; affirming himself to have been an eye-witness of what he related; he asserted his honour and authority, as the Lord of all, the sovereign Judge of the living and the dead; that he was the Divine Saviour spoken of by the prophets, and that all who believed in his name should receive the remission of sin. Here we see the apostle's doctrine to the Gentiles was the same that he had preached at Jerusalem upon and after the day of Pentecost; and the same with what our Lord had declared concerning himself, *a free and complete salvation by faith.* He did not, in the least, attempt to accommodate his subject to any supposed prejudices of his new hearers; but faithfully acquitted himself of his message, and left the event to God. The mystery of Christ crucified, which was a stumbling-block to the Jews, was, by many of the Gentiles, accounted foolishness and absurdity; but the apostles proposed it simply and indifferently to all. In the present case, the success was (what has, perhaps, seldom happened) universal; the whole company believed, and received the Holy Ghost immediately, previous to baptism, and without the usual imposition of the apostle's hands. This signal attestation with which the Lord honoured their faith, unanswerably removing every doubt concerning their fitness, Peter immediately directed them to be baptised, in the name of the Lord Jesus, through whom they had already received that inward and spiritual grace, of which baptism was the outward and visible sign.

When this affair was reported in Judea, it was not at first agreeable to those who knew not the warrant and grounds on which Peter had proceeded; so that, when he returned to Jerusalem,

he found himself under a necessity of vindicating* his conduct to the Jewish converts: a full proof that they did not think him infallible, or possessed of that superiority over the whole church which designing men, for promoting their own ends, have since ascribed to him. But though he was an apostle, and had acted by the express command of God, and though their expostulation seems to have been hasty and rough, yet he did not think it beneath him to give an orderly and circumstantial account of the whole business; they, on the other hand, were open to conviction, and, when they had heard his relation, they instantly acquiesced, and glorified God for his grace given to the Gentiles. This mutual condescension and ingenuousness preserved the first Christians in peace, though they were not always exempted from mistakes and wrong impressions.

By this time the believers, who had been dispersed by persecution, had spread the Gospel beyond the bounds of Judea and Galilee into Cyprus and Syria, and, probably, to more distant parts, particularly to Rome, which, being the centre and conflux of the empire, would hardly be long unvisited; however, in all places, the preaching of the word was confined to the Jews, till Peter's mission to Cornelius afforded an authorized precedent for imparting it to the Heathens.

A. D. 40.] It was soon after publicly preached in Antioch, the capital of Syria, and no less eminent for luxury and depravity of manners; yet amongst these dissolute and enslaved people, the Gospel of Christ, accompanied with a divine power, was suddenly and remarkably prevalent, to turn a great multitude from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God. The means

* Acts, xi.

of this happy change are expressly mentioned. What the philosophers had long attempted, in vain, by cold encomiums on the beauty of virtue, was speedily effected by those who simply preached the Lord Jesus, as the author, finisher, and fountain of salvation. When the news of this good beginning was brought to Jerusalem, the apostles sent Barnabas to Antioch, who, being a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost himself, was greatly rejoiced, when he saw the numbers and sincerity of the converts, and animated them, by his exhortations, to cleave to the Lord with steady resolution; for he was sensible of what they, perhaps, were little aware of as yet, how many arts the enemy of souls employs to discourage those who are beginning to walk in wisdom's ways. He afterwards went to Saul, and prevailed on him to leave Tarsus, and join with him in the service of the Gospel at Antioch. By the Lord's blessing on the endeavours of these faithful labourers, the church was so greatly increased, that the believers there first received the general denomination of Christians: a significant and instructive appellation, strongly importing their duty and relation to Christ, and to each other; and has therefore universally obtained, and will, probably, subsist to the end of time. But though this name is accounted honourable with us, and has always been deemed, by those who truly deserve it, the noblest title, *the highest style* of man, it had not the same general estimation when first imposed. In the mouth of unbelievers, whether Jews or Heathens, it was a term of infamy and reproach, and expressive of the highest contempt;* and may be therefore

*——quos per flagitia invisos vulgus Christianos appellabat: auctor nominis ejus Christus, qui, Tiberio imperante, per procuratorem Pontium Pilatum supplicüis affectus erat.—*Tacitus*, Ann. xv.

ranked among the many opprobrious epithets by which the Lord's faithful followers have been marked out to the rage and scorn of the world.

Caligula, having rendered himself universally odious by his inhumanity and caprice, was assassinated in his palace, in the fourth year of his reign. *

CLAUDIUS, A. D. 41.] He was succeeded by Claudius, who, soon after his entrance on the government, bestowed the kingdom of Judea on Herod Agrippa, a grandson of Herod, styled the Great (mentioned Matt. ii.), the nephew to Herod the tetrarch, who put John the Baptist to death. This prince experienced much of that vicissitude which usually attends ambition; he had been detained in prison and chains by Tiberius, greatly favoured and advanced by Caligula, and now seemed to have attained the summit of his wishes; but, employing his power to persecute the church, he was suddenly cut off, in the height of his prosperity: † for who can harden himself against the Lord and prosper? Herod was a professed zealot for the law of Moses and the Jewish institutions, and studied by every means to ingratiate himself with the people. He first expended vast sums in the defence and ornament of the city; but it was in his power to attempt a still more acceptable service, by exerting his authority against the people of Christ: and the motives of vanity and popularity by which he was governed, prompted him to embrace the occasion. He began, by apprehending the apostle James, the son of Zebedee, whom he hastily put to death; and finding that the Jews were highly pleased with this step, he proceeded to imprison Peter, intending to delay

* Josephus's Ant. lib. x. † Acts, xii.

his execution till after the passover, [A. D. 44.], that his zeal against these innovators might be applauded by a greater number of spectators. This stroke, though very afflictive to the church, was wisely permitted, to illustrate the courage and fidelity of the apostles. It showed, that their miraculous powers and high office afforded them no sure exemption from persecution; but that they ventured and acted upon the same principles of faith and love to Jesus, in common with other believers. Thus James finished his course, and received the crown the first of the apostles. But Peter, being designed for farther services, was still safe; though, to an eye of sense, he seemed marked out for a speedy sacrifice. Incessant prayer was made on his behalf by the disciples; and the united prayers of God's people have an efficacy which can be withstood by no human power: when he inclines them to join with earnestness and perseverance in prayer, it is because he has already determined to grant their petition. In this case the answer was signal, though not immediate. The night before Peter was to have been brought forth to suffer, he was sleeping between his keepers, with that serenity which is peculiar to those who have a good cause, a good conscience, and a steady faith in God. Neither the inconveniences of a prison, nor the expectation of death, could discompose him, for he knew in whom he had believed; but he was awakened by an angel, who freed him from his chains, opened the prison doors, and brought him into the street, unperceived by the guards. After the angel had thus set him at liberty, and was departed, Peter went to the house where his friends were at that instant praying for his deliverance. Thus they had a remarkable proof that the Lord indeed is a God that

heareth prayer; and it is recorded for our encouragement.

In the morning, Herod found himself disappointed of his prey. The guards, upon examination,* being unable to give an account of their prisoner, he commanded them to be put to death. It is probable that Herod, or his advisers, might suspect a miraculous interposition (as the apostles had been delivered the same way a few years before); but to punish the keepers, as if they had been guilty of conniving at his escape, was the most likely method to stop farther inquiry, and prevent the people from supposing any thing extraordinary in the affair.

Herod did not long survive this event. He lived and died a monument of the instability of human greatness. He was much devoted to his Roman masters, and had a taste for their magnificence. This induced him to celebrate games and shows at Cæsarea, in honour of the emperor: here he laboured to display the utmost of his grandeur. His pride was farther flattered, by the arrival of an embassy from Tyre and Sidon. These cities had incurred his displeasure; but, as they chiefly drew their subsistence from his dominions, they were compelled to supplicate peace; which, though they had highly offended him, they obtained, by their interest with Blastus, his chamberlain. The king appointed a day to receive their submission, when he appeared with a splendour that dazzled the eyes of the spectators. He

* Herod examined them himself. It is probable he found strong reason to think Peter had been miraculously delivered; but, like a *wise* politician, he dissembled his conviction, and, to stifle all suspicion, wreaked his resentment upon the soldiers. They, without doubt, believed there was something extraordinary in the case, and might have said so if they had lived;—but dead men tell no tales.

addressed himself to the ambassadors in a pompous oration, suited, we may suppose, to give them the highest idea both of his power and his clemency. When he had ended, he heard his praises resound from every quarter; the multitude shouted, "It "is the voice of a god, not of a man." His vain heart was elated with this impious compliment, which, indeed, was no more than had often been used upon such occasions among the Heathens; but when it was now adopted by those who professed a knowledge of the true God, the proud worm, who durst be pleased with it, was made a sudden and awful example of the divine displeasure: the avenging angel of the Lord smote him with an irresistible, though invisible stroke; and, while surrounded with the fancied insignia of majesty, and in the midst of their idolatrous acclamations, he found and confessed himself a mortal. He was seized with excruciating pains, and expired in a few days, being, in a manner, devoured by vermin bred from his bowels. With his death the persecution ceased. He perished, and was quickly forgot; but the word of God, which he had attempted to suppress, grew and multiplied as before.

The church of Antioch, during this time, greatly increased, and enjoyed the benefit of many excellent teachers; some of whom were endued with a prophetical spirit, by which the Lord intimated his will to them in particular cases. In this way they had been informed of an approaching dearth, and, as seasons of scarcity would severely affect the disciples in Judea, who laboured under peculiar difficulties, they *cheerfully* contributed to their relief, and sent the collection to Jerusalem by Saul and Barnabas, who, having fulfilled their commission, returned to Antioch about this

time.* [A. D. 45.] These two were soon afterwards appointed, by an express revelation, to propagate the knowledge of the Gospel in other countries: they were set apart to this service by the solemn prayers of the church, and attended by John, surnamed Mark, who had accompanied them from Jerusalem. Thus they went forth, like Abraham, uncertain whither they were to go, but assured of an infallible guidance and power to direct and prepare the way.

It is generally believed that, nearly about the same time, the apostles at Jerusalem likewise separated to preach the Gospel, in the districts respectively allotted them by the direction of the Holy Spirit; and we have some account from antiquity of their several provinces, according to which, they divided among them the greatest part of the known world, from India to Barbary, and from Abyssinia to Scythia. Indeed there is no doubt but they executed their commission as apostles, and spread the Gospel far and wide; but the particulars recorded of their labours, sufferings, and circuits, are not transmitted with such authenticity and clearness as to give entire satisfaction. The only *certain* history we have of the apostolic age is that of Luke, which we call the Acts of the Apostles; and this, from the period we are now come to, is confined to those events in which Paul was personally concerned, and does not even carry on his history to the end of his life. The wisdom of God having given us, both in the life of Jesus and of his first servants, rather a specimen sufficient for our instruction, than a complete history to gratify our curiosity, to this plan we shall conform; and, while we have the light of an inspired

* Acts, xiii.

writer, we shall not wander after the glimmerings of tradition. I shall therefore, in the progress of this chapter, confine myself to the evangelist's narration, so far as it goes; and when he leaves us, it will be sufficient to comprise, in a very narrow compass, the most certain, or most probable, incidents which we can recover to complete the records of the first century.

Saul and Barnabas embarked at Seleucia, a seaport in the neighbourhood of Antioch, and sailed to Cyprus. They landed at Salamis, on the east side, and proceeded through the island to Paphos, in the west, making the first tender of the Gospel in every place to the Jews. At Paphos, the Roman governor, Sergius Paulus, was desirous to hear the apostles' doctrine. He was attended by Elymas, a pretended magician and prophet; who, fearing the discovery of his impostures, laboured to divert the governor from his purpose, and to prejudice him against them. But Saul sharply rebuked his wickedness, and, by the * impulse of the Holy Spirit, denounced a sentence against him suitable to his crime: he who endeavoured to detain others in darkness and ignorance, was suddenly struck blind himself. This punishment, which he could neither foresee nor avoid, discovered the vanity of his claims, and convinced the governor that the preachers spoke by an authority su-

* It is expressly said, Saul, or Paul, was filled with the Holy Ghost; therefore the severe expressions in his reprimand were not the effects of intemperate anger, but a solemn declaration of the sorcerer's true character: yet it is safer to imitate the apostle in his patience and humility, than in this singular instance. The power of God, which accompanied his words, proved by what impulse and authority he spoke. We, who are not apostles, and who make no claim to apostolic power, shall act more in character, to conform to the general rule St. Paul has given us: 2 Tim. ii. 24, 25.

perior to their own; he therefore attended more carefully to their words, and became soon a partaker of their faith.

From Cyprus they sailed to Perga in Pamphylia, where their attendant Mark, either already wearied with fatigue, or apprehensive of greater difficulties, or from a fickleness and levity of temper, would proceed no farther with them, but returned to Jerusalem. By this indiscretion he not only lost many valuable opportunities, which he afterwards regretted, but, in the end, gave occasion to a great difference between Barnabas and Paul. Such is the state of humanity, that those persons in a society who cannot do much good, are often by their imprudence the cause of much harm, even where they intend otherwise. From Perga they proceeded to Antioch in Pisidia, and entered into the synagogue. [A. D. 46.] Their habit and manners bespoke them Jews, but perhaps the rulers of the synagogue were not apprised of their character. When the ordinary service was finished, they were desired to propound their sentiments. Paul, who was usually the speaker, addressed them in a long discourse, a valuable abstract of which is preserved to us. In his introduction he reminded them of their ancient history and prophecies; but the sum and substance of his sermon was Jesus. He proved from the Scripture, that *He* was the Messiah, in whom the promises centred, and proposed him to all as the great object of faith, through whom, and by whom alone, forgiveness of sin was to be obtained, and a free justification from those offences for which the law of Moses had made no provision. In the close, he solemnly warned them of the danger of rejecting this Saviour and his Gospel. His discourse made no great impression upon the Jews; but some of

the Heathens, who had been occasionally present, desired to hear the matter farther explained: accordingly, on the next Sabbath, almost the whole city was collected to hear the Gospel, which exceedingly offended the Jews, and prompted them to interpose with cavil and abuse. The apostles then told them in plain terms, that, though their message was first to them, yet, since they refused to receive it, they would henceforth freely proclaim it to the Heathens, from whom they expected a more favourable hearing: nor were they disappointed in their hope, for many of the latter received the word with joy, both in the city and adjacent country.* The Jews, farther exasperated by this success, so wrought upon the passions and prejudices of some persons of influence, both men and women, who were probably proselytes, and superstitiously devoted to their new profession, that Paul and Barnabas were violently compelled to depart; but they left behind them disciples, the fruits of their ministry, who were filled with joy and the Holy Spirit, and thereby enabled to maintain the faith, though their teachers were forced from them.

The apostles, shaking off the dust of their feet (as our Lord had commanded) for a testimony against the obstinate infidelity of the Jews, went from thence to Iconium, the chief city of Lycaonia, where they made many converts, both Jews and Gentiles. But the Jews who believed not, actuated by the same spirit in every

* "When the Jews saw the *multitudes*, they were filled with "envy." Among the clamours raised against persons and doctrines in our own time, some have not been ashamed to allege the great concourse of people usually attending, as a sufficient objection, forgetting (as it should seem) that this was one circumstance that provoked and instigated the enemies of Christianity from the beginning. John, vii. 40. 48. and xi. 48. and xii. 19.

place, opposed them* earnestly; yet they staid so long, and met with such success, that the city was divided; a part holding with them, and a part influenced by their enemies, who from thence took occasion to represent them to the magistrates as disturbers of the public peace: a charge which has often been falsely urged against the ministers of the Gospel. At length their adversaries prevailed, and violent measures were resolved on; but they, having notice of it, withdrew in time to Lystra, in the same province, where they pursued their ministry with their usual zeal and firmness, without being deterred by the opposition they had already met with, or were likely to meet in every place. Among their hearers at Lystra, there was one who had been a cripple from his birth. Paul observing his attention, and some indications of faith in his behaviour, was directed to confirm the doctrine of Jesus by a signal miracle. He commanded the lame man to stand upright upon his feet, and his word was accompanied with immediate power; the man, who had never walked, instantly sprang up, and possessed the perfect use of his limbs. It appeared from this instance, that though miracles have a tendency to rouse the attention, and are a proof of a power beyond the ordinary course of things, yet they cannot of themselves inform or convince the mind of truth; for the ignorant multitude, though greatly struck with what they saw, were so far from believing the

* Acts, xiv. "The Jews stirred up the people," ver. 2. There is a natural enmity in the hearts of some men, but in many it is dormant; they are engaged in business and pleasure, and would be content to let the people of God alone, as unworthy their notice: these must be *stirred up* by the more zealous, to join in the common cause; and accordingly no pains or misrepresentations are spared to rouse them from their indolence.

apostle's doctrine, on the evidence of this miracle, that they endeavoured to account for it on their own idolatrous principles: they forgot all they had heard of Jesus, and cried out, "The gods are come "down to us in the likeness of men." Agreeably to their blinded notions, they called Barnabas Jupiter, and Paul Mercury; imagining something in them peculiarly characteristic of those fabulous deities. In the warmth of their superstition they assembled, with their high priest* and victims, and would have offered sacrifices to the men who came to turn them from dumb idols to serve the living God. But nothing gives the faithful ministers of Christ greater pain, than to have any part of that honour or dependence addressed to themselves, which they are desirous wholly to engage for their Lord and Master. Paul and Barnabas, who had suffered persecution and ill treatment with patience, were transported beyond their usual bounds at these marks of ignorant applause; they rushed in among the people, confessed their own infirmities, boldly reproved their blind idolatry, and directed them where alone their thanks and worship were due; yet, with all they could say, they hardly prevailed on them to desist. It was happy for them that they sought not their own glory, and could not be elated with the applause of men. Poor and precarious is the reward of those who aim no higher than this; for as the tide, after

* The high priest was probably willing to avail himself of the superstition of the people, and thought it a favourable occasion to establish the belief of a peculiar sanctity and virtue in the temple of Lystra, which might increase the number of votaries, and promote his own wealth and influence; just as a legendary report of the appearance or miracles of some saint or angel, has been improved to procure a veneration for particular cities, or temples, in Christian countries.

running violently one way, soon and suddenly reverts to the contrary extreme; so inconstant is the praise and regard of the unthinking many, who are governed by appearances, and susceptive of every new impression. Some of the restless Jews followed the apostles from Iconium, and, by their insinuations, prevailed on the same people to treat those as malefactors, whom a little before they had revered as deities. They tumultuously assaulted Paul (who being the chief speaker, was usually the chief sufferer), stoned him, and dragged him out of the city, supposing they had killed him: but the Lord, to whom the issues of life and death belong, restored him, and healed his bruises, so that he rose up while the disciples were sorrowfully standing round him; and, having entered into the city, to show that he was neither dead nor intimidated, he was enabled to accompany Barnabas the next day to Derbe.

Here they continued some time, and taught many; and this was the boundary of their present progress. From hence they returned (regardless of their enemies) to the places they had been at before, to Lystra, Iconium, and Perga; confirming the believers, forming them into societies, and constituting elders and pastors from amongst themselves, in every church. In all places they took care to instruct the believers in the nature of their profession, and reminded them of an unalterable necessity in the present constitution of things, "that through much tribulation* we must enter

* Acts, xiv. 22. That this was the case in the primitive times, is generally allowed; but we have been told by some, that things are now greatly altered in this respect: they would persuade us that our Lord's words (Matt. vii. 13.) are no longer in force; that the way to the kingdom, in our happy days, is broad, spacious, smooth and thronged by multitudes

"into the kingdom of God." After this, recommending the new converts to the grace and care of the Lord, in whom they had believed, they again took shipping, and returned to Antioch in Syria. Upon their arrival, they assembled the whole church, and gave them a particular account of all that the Lord had done *for* them, and *by* them, in their late circuit. [A. D. 47.] This is the news which believers delight to relate and hear. The traverses of policy, or the events of war (the usual topics of conversation), afford them but little entertainment; but it rejoices their hearts to be informed of new accessions to the Redeemer's kingdom, and to see how his wisdom and grace triumph over all opposition.

Hitherto the church had only to struggle with outward difficulties; but, as human nature is always the same, and the apostolical times were to transmit instruction to the people of God in every succeeding period, mistakes, disputes, and divisions were, by degrees, permitted to take place among professed believers. If it had not been so, we might not only have been discouraged by the great disparity between the first Christians, and those who have lived since; but, for want of rules

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(the very characters he has given us of the road to destruction.) Such teachers and writers are little aware how they proclaim their own ignorance. If they knew the spirit of enmity which the world bears to true Christianity—the trials with which the Lord visits his people, to prove and exercise their faith—the assaults and temptations they endure from the powers of darkness—the griefs they feel from a sense of their own unfaithfulness and unfruitfulness—the fightings without, and fears within, which are more or less experienced in the Christian life—if they knew these things, they would speak otherwise. The beaten way to honours and preferments is, perhaps, free from these tribulations; but not so the way that will lead to the kingdom of God.

and precedents of sufficient authority, we should have been continually at a loss how to oppose and confute the various errors which have appeared and been revived during so many centuries. The Divine Wisdom therefore thought fit to suffer every false and dangerous notion, whereby the enemy of souls would at any time attempt to corrupt the simplicity of the faith, to make its first entrance while the apostles were yet living, that we might have their instructions and examples to guide us in every emergency. However paradoxical it may seem, we hope, in a proper place, to show, that no new opinion, either right or wrong, respecting the faith in Christ, has been started since the close of the Scriptural Canon. As the Gospel, that good and perfect gift, came down from the Father of Light complete, and has received no amendment from the hands through which it has successively past,—so, on the other hand, the grand deceiver exerted all his force against it, and availed himself of all his influence on the ignorance and wickedness of men from the very beginning, and has no subtile devices in reserve now, having tried his utmost resources over and over. It is true, length of time, and change of circumstances, have afforded him opportunities of placing his delusions in various lights, and have given some of his schemes a seeming strength and establishment which they had not at first; but, as a man attained to his full stature and vigour, is the same individual person that was once an infant, unable to stand alone; so there neither is, nor has been, any erroneous principle, however authorized or recommended, or perhaps applauded as a new discovery by those who are ignorant of Scripture or antiquity, but we can, from express passages in the apostles' writings, show that the same existed in

their time, though in a more feeble and infantile state. This point we are to illustrate more at large hereafter; at present I am only concerned to take notice of a dissension that arose among the believers at Antioch, not long after the return of Saul and Barnabas, which made their presence there particularly useful. This was occasioned by some Judaizing professors, who came down from Judea, and taught the Gentile converts that, except they were circumcised and kept the law of Moses, they could not be saved. This dangerous position, arising from a misapprehension of the righteousness of Christ as the only ground of a sinner's acceptance with God, and tending to substitute a quicksand for the foundation of hope, instead of the immoveable rock which God has laid in Zion, was warmly opposed by these apostles of the Gentiles. They had a double conviction of its falsehood, both from the nature of the faith they had received themselves, and the effects of the Gospel they had imparted to others; but many weaker minds, having less experience of the work of grace in their own hearts, and less acquaintance with what the Lord had wrought in others, were staggered. When, therefore, after many debates, the point was not settled to satisfaction, it was resolved to depute Paul and Barnabas to consult the apostles and elders at Jerusalem. [A. D. 49.] If this (as seems probable) was the journey St. Paul refers to, Gal. ii. they were directed to take this step by the Spirit of God, since he there says that he went up to Jerusalem by, or in consequence of, a revelation. They were accompanied by some brethren, and in every place where they found believers, they comforted them with the account of their late progress. At Jerusalem they were cordially received; and, having declared the happy

fruits of their preaching to the Heathens, though they had not attempted to bind them to the Mosaic law, they proceeded to declare the tenet which had been lately advanced, and their motives for opposing it. They soon found persons of the same legal spirit, who justified and repeated the obligation of the ceremonial law upon all who embraced the Gospel. Upon this, a particular day was named for the whole assembly to meet and discuss the question. In this convention there was the highest room to expect that the Spirit of God would influence their resolves, and guard them from giving their sanction to an error, and he did so; yet not by an audible voice or instantaneous impulse, but by presiding over their debates, and enabling them, in the conclusion, to collect and pronounce the true state of the question with infallible evidence and certainty. Here again it is plain that Peter little thought himself entitled to that supreme prerogative, as the immediate Vicar of Jesus Christ, which his pretended successors falsely ascribe to him; nor did his brethren remind him of his privilege, otherwise there could have been no debate, for his declaration would have been decisive; but, waving the claim of authority, he argued the insignificance of the Jewish rites as to salvation, from the Lord's conduct towards Cornelius and his friends, by his ministry. These were the first Gentile converts, and in this instance, he said, the Lord had fully declared his mind, making no difference between Jew and Gentile, purifying their hearts by faith in his blood, and imparting to them those substantial blessings, of which the ceremonial law exhibited no more than the shadow; and which, in comparison of the liberty of the Gospel, he termed an unnecessary yoke, too heavy to be borne. The

assembly then kept silence, while Paul and Barnabas related more at large the fruits of their late mission among the Heathens. The conference was closed, and the determination given, not by Peter, but by James, who asserted the Gentiles' freedom from the Jewish yoke, and enjoined them only to abstain from fornication, from things offered to idols, and from blood. The two latter points were necessary, to preserve a friendly intercourse between the Gentile and Jewish converts, so long as these were indulged in observing the Levitical institutions; and the prohibition from fornication, though immediately belonging to the moral law, which was of universal obligation, was added, to give the Gentiles a deeper sense of the guilt and evil of a practice, which the most civilized and virtuous Heathens considered as almost, if not wholly, innocent.

This sentence was generally embraced: and a letter to the same effect was written to the believers at Antioch, confirming them in their Christian liberty. In this they thought it a sufficient condemnation of the opposite opinion to say, they had given no such commandment: a protestation the apostles might have often repeated, had they lived to this day; but since their genuine writings still subsist, we may, by parity of reason, still infer, that we need not be afraid of rejecting any thing that is enjoined as binding upon the conscience, if we can be sure that the apostles, who were divinely inspired to explain the Christian faith and practice, have given us no precept in its favour. They likewise took care to assert their firm persuasion, that their decision was agreeable to the dictates of the Holy Spirit. This convocation has generally been styled, the *first* Christian council; but, indeed, when we compare it with those which

bore the same name afterwards, and were professedly formed upon this precedent, we shall be almost tempted to say, it was not only the *first*, but the *last*. Here were no intrigues practised, no temporal interests consulted, no fierce and bloody anathemas issued to give a sanction to persecution, no uncertainty or animosity in the issue; but the affair was conducted with freedom and moderation, and the conclusion made by general consent, and to the satisfaction of both parties: how different in these respects from the spirit of after-times! But though this answered the end in the present case, the judgement of the apostles was not entirely obeyed, even while they lived. This debate was revived in other places, and proved a frequent impediment to the peace of the church, so long, at least, as the temple and worship of Jerusalem continued, and gave St. Paul an occasion to write his epistle to the Galatians expressly on this subject. Nay, it seems, the mistake still subsisted in Judea, though none publicly ventured to contradict the decree when it was made. For when, some time after, Peter went to Antioch, and conversed* freely with the Gentile converts, living after their manner for a season; yet, when some brethren came down from Jerusalem, he was so fearful to offend them in this matter, that he separated himself again; and, by his influence, prevailed on Barnabas likewise to dissemble in favour of those of the circumcision. For this weak compliance, whereby he seemed to overthrow what he had before established, St. Paul withstood him to his face. He did not detract from his character, by insinuations to his prejudice behind his back, nor did he content himself with reproving him in secret; but,

* Gal. ii. 11.

as the offence was public, tending to confirm the Jews in their bigotry, and to offend the weak on both sides, he boldly and publicly rebuked him before them all. Strange weakness, incident to the best of men, that Peter, who had first laid aside his prejudices, who had visited the Gentiles by divine direction, had seen the happy effects of his compliance, and vindicated his own conduct so unanswerably upon a late occasion, should now shrink and trifle, expose himself, and grieve his brethren, through fear of those who came from Jerusalem! To be delivered from the fear of man, is a deliverance indeed! It was happy for Peter that he had, in his brother Paul, a faithful friend, who, by a few well-timed words, broke the chain, and set him at liberty. It is surprising that any who have read this passage should dream of fixing on Peter, above any other of the apostles, to be the supreme and infallible head of the Christian church.

Justus and Silas, two of the brethren, were sent with Barnabas and Paul, to accompany the letter, and to declare the purport of it more at large. They were gladly received at Antioch, and not only confirmed the peace of the church, but were farther helpful to their faith, by the singular gifts with which the Lord had honoured them. In a little time Justus returned to Jerusalem; but Silas chose to continue longer, and was afterwards the constant companion of St. Paul in his travels.

A. D. 50.] This obstacle being removed, the Gospel flourished greatly at Antioch. But, amidst all their services and success there, Paul and Barnabas could not forget the converts they had left in Cyprus and Asia Minor; they proposed, therefore, to make them a second visit, to comfort them, and to see how the work had prospered in their absence. But a difficulty was started concerning

John, surnamed Mark, who had formerly left them at Perga, and, having probably repented of his irresolution, was now desirous to proceed with them again. Paul warmly opposed this, thinking him highly culpable for his inconstancy, and, perhaps too much influenced against him by a spirit of resentment not wholly excusable. On the other hand, Barnabas undertook his apology; in which, besides his tenderness to his fault, he seems to have been moved by considerations which ought to have no place where the service of God is concerned. John was his sister's son, and this led him to consider his conduct in the most favourable light. Thus they were both a little partial in the cause, but much more wrong in the issue; for the contention became so sharp between them, that it broke their harmony. They determined to part: accordingly Barnabas took Mark, (whose company he had dearly purchased by the loss of Paul's,) and sailed to Cyprus, his native place; and Paul, choosing Silas in his room, went through Syria and Cilicia, being recommended to the Lord by the prayers of the brethren. So that their former work was now divided between them.

I must venture to digress here a little, for the sake of two remarks, of which the course of our history may often remind the reader. 1. How small an occasion will discover human infirmity, even in the brightest characters! Not all the graces of Paul and Barnabas, nor the remembrance of the services and difficulties they had jointly experienced, nor the importance of the common cause in which they were engaged, nor the fear of giving offence to the world and to the church, could restrain these dear friends, fellow-labourers, and fellow-sufferers, from contending and separating about a trifle. 2. How wise is the over-ruling

providence of God, permitting such things for the trial of some, the instruction of others, and the better carrying on his own designs! In succeeding revivals of religion, the like differences * have sometimes taken place among the main instruments, and from as trivial causes; and though they have not obtained without fault in some, and inconvenience to many, yet the event has proved them no hinderance upon the whole. The work has become more diffusive, and more incontestable, when persons of different tempers, sentiments, and talents, who seemed, to superficial observers, as the heads of different parties, have laboured with equal zeal and success in advancing the one great design of the Gospel. As a skilful gardener raises many plants in a little spot of ground, and removes them afterwards to places where they will have more room to grow and flourish; so they, who are designed for extensive usefulness, are often first reared within a little compass, within the sight and knowledge of each other, where they are sheltered and strengthened, while tender, by their mutual advices, prayers, and examples, and seem to have only one heart and one mind; but were they always to continue thus closely connected, no one would have room to expand according to the measure of gifts and services which the Lord has appointed them; therefore they are thinned and transplanted: either persecutions from without, or weaknesses, mistakes, or jealousies

* To mention only one by anticipation—the unhappy dispute between Luther and Zuinglius, and their respective followers, concerning the words—"This is my body." The difference between them was little more than imaginary; but the mischiefs it occasioned were real, important, and numerous, and would, probably, have stifled the Reformation in its birth, if it had not been so remarkably under an Almighty protection.

among themselves, scatter them afar, to places and undertakings they had no thoughts of, and which would not have been otherwise attempted.

The apostle Paul, with his companion * Silas, proceeded (as has been mentioned) through Syria and Cilicia, to the parts he had formerly visited. When he came to Lystra, he chose Timothy for his associate and companion in his journey, who, it is probable, had been converted by his ministry, and a witness to his sufferings for the Gospel, when he was there before. Timothy was of Jewish extract by the mother's side, and carefully educated, from his infancy, in the knowledge of the Scriptures; but his father was a Greek. This circumstance being generally known to the Jews, and likely to render him less acceptable among them, Paul, to obviate their prejudices, directed him to be circumcised; thus showing his readiness to become all things to all men, so far as was consistent with a good conscience, and conducive to edification; for though, when the observance of the Mosaic law was insisted on as necessary to salvation, he steadily opposed it, and would not admit the least addition to the doctrine of free justification by the blood of Christ, he was willing to permit it to the Jewish converts in their present situation, and to accommodate himself to their weakness, for their advantage. He had before withstood the circumcision of Titus (who was a Gentile) when it was urged, as a necessary point; but now that debate was settled in favour of Gospel liberty, he proposed the circumcision of Timothy himself. The seeming inconsistence of his conduct vanishes, if the difference of the two cases is rightly understood: but those who act from the most enlarged

* Acts, xvi.

principles, who know when and in what points resolution is necessary, and when and how far it is expedient to yield to others, will always be thought inconstant and inconsistent by the zealots of parties. In the course of his progress, he delivered in every city the decree lately determined in Jerusalem, which, though primarily directed to Antioch, was of equal force, as a rule and bond of peace, in all places where there were both Jewish and Gentile converts. Thus having watered his former planting, he proceeded to preach in Phrygia and Galatia. The route of the Gospel was directed by the Spirit of God, who restrained the apostle from entering the province which is called, by way of distinction, the Proconsular Asia, of which Ephesus was the capital; not that this country was to be excluded from the knowledge of Christ, for St. Paul preached in many* parts of it afterwards with great success; but the proper season was not yet come, the Lord having an important service for them first in another place. For the same reason, and by the same influence, they were prevented going into Bithynia, which they had some thoughts of attempting. Thus, in a manner undetermined where they were to labour, they came to Troas, a sea-port in the Archipelago; and when their journey was now bounded by the sea, they received a farther intimation of the Lord's will, and found that he had been leading them in the right way, for they were brought to a port proper for embarking to the place where the Lord had designed to send them.

A. D. 51.] Here St. Paul had a vision by night, of a man standing by him, whose garb and expression intimated his country, and entreating him,

* See Acts, xix. 10.

saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. This vision was attended with such circumstances, as left no room to doubt either its origin or meaning; so that, when he had communicated it to his companions, they assuredly collected that the Lord called them into Macedonia Accordingly they took shipping, and having a favourable wind, they soon arrived at Neapolis; from whence they proceeded by land to Philippi, a place of note, and a Roman colony. Their preaching and continuance in this city, which, in time, became the seat of a flourishing church, was productive of several interesting and important events.

On the sabbath day, they went out of the city, to a place by the river side (a usual resort of the Jews for the exercise of public prayer); where, meeting with some women (as it should seem) before the rest were assembled, they spake freely of the great subject which was always uppermost in their hearts and mouths. One of them, named Lydia, a native of Thyatira, and then resident at Philippi, gave a peculiar attention to St. Paul's discourse: the reason is assigned; the Lord opened her heart. The rest heard the same words; but the hearts of all are dull, contracted, and averse to spiritual truths; so that, without a divine interposition, the most powerful speakers speak in vain. Lydia heard to good purpose; she believed, and was immediately baptized, with her family, and gladly received the messengers of Gospel grace into her house.

Continuing to preach in this place so long as they remained at Philippi, they were often met by a young woman under the influence of an evil spirit, who, as they passed by, cried after them, These men are the servants of the Most High God, who declare unto us the way of salvation;

in like manner as the demoniacs had sometimes confessed our Saviour's authority and mission. It may seem strange that an evil spirit should testify in favour of the preachers of the Gospel; but, perhaps, it was either to make them suspected of a confederacy, or to draw them into a snare. However, when this had been often repeated, St. Paul, who could not bear to be spoken well of by a spirit which was not of God, commanded him, in the name of Jesus, to quit his possession. The spirit, compelled to obey, left the woman instantly; but this opened a way to give them disturbance in another manner. Her masters, to whom she had formerly brought great profit by her divining talent, finding she was no longer willing or able to procure them advantage by that means, appre hended Paul and Silas, as the chief instruments of their loss, and brought them before the magis trates, with the heavy charge (which is usually revived when the preaching of the Gospel inter feres with the views of interest), that they exceedingly disturbed the peace of the city, by attempting innovations contrary to the established religion: they styled them Jews to the Romans, on account of their open abhorrence of idol worship, which was carefully supported by the Roman laws and customs. The unthinking multitude soon joined in the alarm; and the magistrates, easily prejudiced by the terms of the accusation, instead of acting as impartial judges, declared themselves parties in the affair. Without examining into particulars, they violently tore off the clothes of Paul and Silas, and having caused them to be beat with many stripes, they cast them into prison, giving the jailer a particular charge to keep them safely. This command was executed with severity: he thrust them into

the inner prison, and fastened their feet in the stocks. But no walls or dungeons can exclude those comforts of God's Spirit, which are promised to those who suffer for righteousness' sake, and which are able to overpower the sense of every inconvenience. Paul and Silas were so little discomposed by this cruel treatment, that they joyfully sung hymns of praise to God, and were heard by the other prisoners; who, probably, were surprised at the cheerfulness they expressed in such circumstances. But they were surprised much more at the testimony the Lord immediately gave in behalf of his servants: for, while they were thus engaged, on a sudden the earth trembled; the very foundations of the prison were shaken, so that all the doors flew open, and every one's fetters and bonds were instantly loosed. The noise awakened the jailer; who, supposing the prisoners were all escaped, and dreading the consequences, in the first transports of his terror, drew his sword to slay himself; for so the false wisdom of the Heathens, ignorant of the awful realities beyond the grave, taught men to avoid the pressure of present troubles by desperately plunging themselves into an unknown eternity. But St. Paul, though in another part of the prison, and in the dark, was made acquainted with his purpose, and called out to him, with a loud voice, "Do thyself no harm, "we are all here!" It encreased his surprise to find that his design was made known to them, and that those whom he had treated so hardly should forget all their wrongs, and interest themselves in his preservation. Such an instance of forgiveness and tenderness to an enemy deeply affected him, and convinced him of the wrong he had done them, more forcibly than the sharpest expostulations could have done. This is, indeed, the peculiar

triumph of a Christian, to overcome evil with good. He immediately called for lights, and, in agony of guilt and terror, sprung in, and cast himself at the feet of those over whom he had so lately tyrannized. After this expression of his respect and compunction for the injury he had done them, he brought them out, and addressed them with that question, of the last importance to every awakened soul, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Paul and Silas, who had but one answer to this question, suited to every rank of life, and to sinners of every degree, directed him to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, as the only and infallible means of salvation. This faith the Lord was pleased to give: so that, when he had brought them to his house, and heard them explain the doctrine more at large, he believed, and was baptized, with all his family. Upon this, his sorrow was turned into permanent joy; and now it appeared why the Lord had permitted his servants to be thus rudely handled. Amongst other reasons, it was on the account of this jailer, who would otherwise have remained a stranger to the Gospel, if the Lord, in the unsearchable riches of his mercy, had not thus sent it to him, and, by the concurrent dispensations of his providence, disposed him to receive it with thankfulness, as life from the dead. It likewise proved the vanity of all attempts to suppress the truth. The magistrates and people abused the preachers, and put them in prison; but the effect was quite contrary to their intentions; for by this means the jailer, the instrument of their cruelty, with his household, were converted: and thus the apostle's enemies, through the over-ruling hand of God, became subservient to his design, and helped him to some of the first members of his new church.

The jailer, thus made partaker of the faith, ex-

pressed his gratitude to his prisoners; he washed their stripes, and set meat before them, and was soon freed from any suspense on their account; for, in the morning, the magistrate sent him orders to dismiss them from confinement. But St. Paul was willing to let them know that they had failed in their duty, and acted against those very laws and customs, of which, as Romans, they professed to be so tenacious. A citizen of Rome was not liable to bonds or scourging, and a subject of Rome, though not a citizen, could not be legally punished till he had been permitted to answer his accusers face to face (Acts, xxv. 16.) The apostle was injured in both these respects; they had punished him without trial, and they had bound and beat him, though he was a Roman: he therefore asserted his privilege. He might have insisted on satisfaction; but he was a Christian, a willing disciple of a suffering Saviour; he had been once a persecutor himself, and had obtained forgiveness, therefore he found it easy to forgive. His remonstrance made the magistrates willing to submit to his terms; they came themselves, and honourably dismissed their prisoners, entreating them that, to prevent farther inconveniences, they would withdraw from the city; which they did, after they had taken leave of Lydia and the other disciples.

A. D. 52.] From hence, passing through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, the residence of the Roman governor. Here Paul, according to his usual custom, applying himself first to the Jews, discoursed and *reasoned* with them in their synagogue three successive sabbaths, out of their own Scriptures, opening * the true

* Acts, xvii. 3. "Opening and alleging;" first explaining the true sense of the passage, and then laying down plain and un-

sense of the prophecies concerning the Messiah, and then showing their accomplishment in the person of Jesus. His labour was not wholly in vain; some of them believed and became disciples; but the rest and the greater part, discovered the indignation and enmity of their hearts against the truth. Under such leaders, the unthinking rabble are easily instigated to do mischief, so that they found no difficulty to raise a tumultuous mob, who assaulted the house of Jason, where Paul and Silas resided; but not finding them there, they forced away Jason, and some of the new believers, before the magistrates. The accusation was, that the preachers of the Gospel, who, from the effect of their doctrine in disturbing the false peace of sin, began to be sufficiently described, when spoken of, as * men who turned the world upside down, and threw all into confusion wherever they appeared, were come thither also; that Jason had received and countenanced them; and that their fundamental tenets were inconsistent with obe-

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deniable deductions from it, applicable to the case in hand. Thus much is implied in the Greek words, Διανοιγων και παρατιθεμενος. A proper model for preachers and writers in divinity. How many controversies would cease, how much time would be redeemed, how many offences would be avoided, if it was universally followed; if the Scriptures were explained in their true sense and connexion, and nothing advanced but what could be fairly deduced from such an explanation?

* It is still thought a sufficient and unanswerable objection against the preaching of the Gospel to say, These opinions cause divisions and separations, and break the peace of families and communities. We may bring the point to a short issue. Did our Lord foretel this as one sure and perpetual consequence that would attend the prevalence of his Gospel, or did he not? If he did not, what is the meaning of Matt. x. 34—36? If he did, then by what name are we to call that manner of preaching which has either no tendency or no power to disturb the false and dangerous peace of a wicked world?

dience to government, since they professed and inculcated subjection to one Jesus, whom they styled their king. By such misrepresentations the enemies of the Gospel doctrine have often aimed to render it obnoxious to the civil powers. The rulers were alarmed at this accusation; but, being unwilling to proceed to extremities, though obliged to take some notice of what seemed to affect the interest of Cæsar, they took sufficient security of Jason and the rest for their good behaviour, and dismissed them without farther trouble. In the mean time, Paul and Silas, against whom the violence had been chiefly intended, were sent safely away by the brethren to Berea; where, regardless of their past dangers and sufferings, they pursued their endeavours to recommend the Gospel to the Jews; and in this place they met with a friendly reception. It is said the Bereans were more noble than those of Thessalonica; for to be open to conviction and information is the mark of a noble mind: they were of a more free and ingenuous temper, not slaves to the fear of man or the power of prejudice; they heard with candour, and examined the Scriptures themselves to find the truth. The Gospel of Christ is suited to give the fullest satisfaction to inquirers of this spirit; accordingly many of them believed. But when the Jews of Thessalonica were informed of this, they followed Paul thither, with a view to repeat the part they had acted in their own city; but they came too late. Paul had already planted the Gospel, and, leaving Silas and Timothy, who were less obnoxious, to remain a little longer with the brethren, he was conducted first towards the sea, to elude the attempts of his enemies, and afterwards to Athens, a city, which for its eminence in literature and all the polite arts, was styled, by general consent, *The seat of the Muses.*

While the apostle waited at Athens for the arrival of Silas and Timothy, his spirit was inflamed with a lively concern for the honour of God and the welfare of souls. It grieved him to see a city so famed for refinement and philosophy, wholly given to idolatry; and, with respect to the most important concerns of life, quite upon a level with the most ignorant barbarians. St. Paul is generally allowed, by those who will allow him little else, to have been a man of taste and letters. He was now at Athens, the school of philosophy, and centre of the fine arts: painting, statuary, architecture, and elegance appeared in every quarter; but the affecting observation he had made of the state of the inhabitants so filled his mind, that he could take little notice of any thing else. To those who understand the nearness and importance of an eternal state, the highest improvements of unsanctified reason afford little more entertainment than the trivial sports of children, or the more wretched amusements of lunatics. He was so struck with the ignorance, superstition, and wickedness of the people, that he could relish none of the beauties of the place; but, full of a different emotion, compassionately laboured to inspire them with true wisdom. He was soon encountered by the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers, the respective advocates for those principles of pleasure and pride, to one or the other of which all men are enslaved, till the Gospel sets them free. Here, in some measure, accommodating himself to the prevailing taste, he reasoned with the reasoners, and silenced the wise men of the world, in their own way, by dint of argument; but the contest was unequal; their syllogisms soon failed them, and they were forced to retreat to their last refuge, an affected wit and raillery. Unable to answer the force of his dis-

courses, they triumphed without a victory, and expressed their contempt of him and his doctrine by a word of the lowest and most despicable signification, which our version not improperly renders, *a babbler*; but perhaps no term in our language can sufficiently express the poignancy of the original. Others so entirely mistook the state of the question, that they thought he was a publisher or setter forth of strange gods. They thought that Jesus and the Resurrection were deities they had not before heard of; and his discourse always turning upon these topics, they concluded (indeed with reason) that his only business and desire was to proclaim to all, the Divinity whom he worshipped. And it is no wonder that, from a half-attention to his words, they should be induced to personify the Resurrection as a deity, since the Heathens had altars erected not only to Honour, Virtue, and Liberty, but to the vices and disorders of human nature, such as Fear, Shame, Famine, and Fevers.

This weak mistake gave occasion to summon him before the council who bore the name of Areopagus, or the Hill of *Mars*, from the place where they met; an assembly in high estimation for authority and wisdom, and whose particular office it was to superintend the public religion, and preserve it from innovation. It does not appear, however, that he underwent a formal trial before them. His opponents seemed rather disposed to gratify their curiosity than their malice: their politeness, perhaps, made them something averse to the severer forms of persecution, and content with the less invidious (though to many not less formidable) methods of scorn and ridicule. Their prevailing passion was the love of novelty; they spent their time in telling or hearing some new, or, as the Greek expresses

it, some newer thing. The expected news lost its relish the moment it was known, and they were always in search of something *newer still;* therefore the Gospel, though the strangest, as well as the most important news they had ever met with, could not engage such volatile minds: while it was the newer thing, the freshest news, they were content to listen, but as soon as they were satisfied what it was, they wanted to hear something else. The apostle no where met with so little success as amongst this polite, learned, ignorant people; and wherever this Athenian spirit prevails, it retards the success of the Gospel more than all the arts and violence of persecution.

The discourse of the apostle on this occasion is equally a standard of fine address and of just reasoning. He had observed their religious rites and worship with attention, and had selected, from among their numerous altars, the one which was most fit for his purpose. The beauty of his exordium is obscured by the expression, "too superstitious," in our version. The Greek word to which it answers is ambiguous, and suited to bespeak a favourable hearing, rather than importing an abrupt reproof: *q. d.* "I perceive, indeed, Athe-
"nians, that you are observant of the invisible
"powers in an unusual manner, for besides the
"variety of temples and altars which you have in
"common with other cities of Greece, I observed
"one with a peculiar inscription,—'To the un-
"known God:' this God, as yet unknown to you,
"is he whom I serve, and the new doctrine, of
"which you ask me, relates to his will and wor-
"ship." This was the most happy and pertinent medium to enlarge from that could be imagined. The Athenians, always eager to hear some newer thing, expected an account of new deities, but

Paul referred them to an altar and inscription among themselves, which, merely by being obvious, had escaped their reflection. It is to be feared that this observation and inscription may suit the devotions of many who think themselves Christians. The same address is visible in his whole argument. To the Jews he quoted the books of the Holy Scripture, but with these Heathens he appealed to the volume of creation, and argued from the impresses of power, wisdom, and goodness, every where displayed before their eyes, the excellence and independence of their great Author, how little he stood in need of men, and how unworthy of his Divine Majesty all their laborious inventions were, while they thought to honour him by worshipping the works of their own hands: he asserted the providence and omnipresence of God, that he was the fountain of life and all its comforts, the supreme disposer of all events, and the common father of mankind; confirming this part of his doctrine by a quotation from Aratus, one of their own poets. He afterwards proceeded to the topics of revelation, a resurrection to future life, and a final judgment by the man Christ Jesus. It would require too much room to point out particularly the spirit, propriety, and evidence of this short sermon. But no oratory or reasoning can change the heart. The effect was the same as may be observed amongst ourselves, when much inferior instruments declare the truths of God: some mocked, and accounted this wisdom the merest folly; others, pleased with his *manner*, and perhaps affected with some transient emotions of mind, expressed a willingness to hear him again; and a few, a very few, believed, among whom was Dionysius, one of the Areopagite judges.

Having so little encouragement to prolong his stay at Athens, the apostle proceeded to Corinth, at that time accounted the chief city of Greece. Here he unexpectedly found companions prepared for him.* Aquila, a native of Pontus, by birth a Jew, with Priscilla his wife, had received the faith of the Gospel in Italy, from whence they had been lately constrained to remove by an edict of the emperor, enjoining all Jews to depart from Rome. Whether the Christians were particularly aimed at by the name of Jews in this decree, is uncertain: but as their Lord and Master had lived in Judea, and the first preachers and converts were generally of that nation, perhaps, likewise, because they asserted and proved their doctrines from those books for which the Jews professed the highest veneration, the Christians were for some time considered as Jews by most of the Heathens. This happy pair, partners in faith and affection, were led by that Divine Providence which certainly, though secretly, guides the steps of his servants, to seek a retreat in Corinth, about the time St. Paul arrived there. They soon became acquainted and, of course, intimate. He often mentions them in his writings, as having, upon many occasions, afforded him help and comfort; for, as in nature, so in grace, none are so sufficient to themselves, but they may be glad of assistance from others, even from such as are in many respects their inferiors. They abode and wrought together, being of the same business; for though St. Paul well understood his liberty, and that, as a preacher of the Gospel, he had a right to expect maintenance from those to whom he ministered, yet he condescended to work, as a common handicraft, at the employment of

* Acts, xviii.

making tents. One reason of his submitting to this, he informs us himself, was a prudent precaution to obviate any insinuations that might be raised or received against him, of a design to make gain of godliness, or to abuse his influence to mercenary purposes. But his example may farther teach us, that secular employments are not *in themselves* incompatible with a faithful and regular discharge of the Gospel ministry, when the circumstances of the times may so require. But his main and proper business, to which he always attended in * season and out of season, was preaching the Gospel of Christ. To this he addressed himself at Corinth, first (as usual) to the Jews, being pressed in spirit, borne on by a constraining sense of the love of Christ and the worth of souls, and probably more confirmed and warmed by the accounts brought by Timothy and Titus, who rejoined him here from Macedonia. Animated, rather than discouraged, by the opposition he had formerly met with, he strenuously urged to the Jews, from their own Scriptures, the proofs that Jesus was the Messiah, with such evidence as must have gained their assent, had they not been hardened and

* 2 Tim. iv. 2. "Be instant in season and *out of season;*" not unseasonably, as supposing a time in which it would be better to forbear, but *in season*, at set and stated times, and *out of season*, that is, occasionally. Improve every opportunity that offers, not on the Lord's day only, but on any other; not only in a solemn and full discourse, but let the glory of God and the good of souls be your scope in every conversation! It answers to the account the apostle gives of his own conduct: he preached publicly and from house to house, by night and by day, Acts, xx. 20. 31. As a physician, besides his ordinary round of practice, is ready to afford his help upon every sudden application, this should be the aim of a Gospel minister; he should be constant to all his stated appointments, and willing to make the most of every unexpected call to service.

obstinate; but when they persisted in returning contradiction and despite to his repeated labours of love, he at length gave them up, and told them, that having discharged his duty and his conscience, their blood would be upon their own heads, that their guilt was most aggravated, and their destruction approaching; and that, for the future, he would frequent their synagogues no more, but address himself to the Gentiles. He accordingly preached in the house of one Justus, near the synagogue, and though most of the Jews were hardened beyond the reach of conviction, yet the Lord had a small remnant amongst them here likewise. Crispus, a chief ruler or president of the synagogue, believed, with all his house, and of the Heathens many were converted and baptized.

If Corinth was less celebrated than Athens for philosophy and science, it was more so for riches and luxury, which are no less powerful hinderances to the reception of the truth. This consideration, joined to the violent spirit of his opposers, might perhaps have prompted him to a speedy departure; but the Lord, whom he served, appeared to him in a vision, and bid him not be afraid or discouraged, but continne to preach, assuring him his labour should not be in vain; for, though present appearances might promise but little success, [A. D. 53.], he had many people known to himself in that proud, sensual, idolatrous city.—It signifies but little, what enemies or difficulties a faithful minister may be threatened with, if the Lord has many people in that place: he who sent him to call them out of darkness into his marvellous light, will support and defend him, so that either none shall rise against him, or at least none be able to prevail to his real harm. That the people whom the Lord here

spoke of as his own, were no better, either by nature or practice, than others, is plain from what the apostle reminds them of after their conversion, 1 Cor. vi. 9—11. We* learn from the same epistle, that his conflicts and exercises at this time were very great. Supported, however, by such a seasonable and gracious encouragement, he remained there a year and a half; and all the efforts of his enemies were insufficient, either to damp his zeal and activity, or to prevent the success of his labours, though the Lord permitted them to try what they could do, and thereby more clearly showed, that the safety of his servants depends on himself.

When Gallio was proconsul of Achaia (who, as it seems by Luke's expression, entered upon his government during the apostle's abode at Corinth), the Jews appeared tumultuously before the tribunal, with the old accusation, that he subverted the laws of Moses. Gallio prevented Paul's intended defence, and refused to interfere in points foreign to the Roman laws. He said, that if their charge had been laid for any trespass or immorality, he would readily have taken cognisance of the affair, but should leave them to settle their religious disputes between themselves. With this reprimand he dismissed, or rather drove, them from his presence. The conduct of Gallio in this affair has been considered in different lights, and praised or censured accordingly. History gives him a fair character for equity and moderation; and it must be allowed he judged right, in refusing to interpose the civil authority to give sanction to persecution: yet he seems, upon this occasion, to have discovered that political indifference which has prompted so many great and wise men, in the

* 1 Cor. ii. 3.

world's estimation, to treat the Gospel as a trivial scheme unworthy their notice: he rather showed contempt than impartiality; he would not hear either party, because he despised both, and therefore drove them away with scorn. In fine, the Jews not only failed in their design, but were themselves assaulted by some of the inhabitants, who beat Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue, even in the open court, and Gallio, though he saw it, cared for none of these things; which is a farther proof that he was influenced by some other motives than impartiality and a regard to justice, or he would not have suffered his authority to be insulted, and a person (upon his own principles innocent) abused before his face. I suppose (though it is a controverted point) that the Sosthenes here mentioned was at that time an enemy to Paul, and joined in the prosecution attempted against him. Perhaps he was afterwards converted, and accompanied the apostle in his travels, as his name is prefixed, with his own, to his first epistle to the Corinthians.

NERO, A. D. 54.] St. Paul, after about two years' stay in Greece, from his first landing at Macedonia, embarked at Cenchrea, the port of Corinth, intending for Syria. In this voyage they touched at Ephesus, the chief city of the Proper or Proconsular Asia. Here, as in other places, he entered into the Jews' synagogues, desirous, if possible, to lead them to the knowledge of the Messiah. At this city he left his dear companions Aquila and Priscilla, who would willingly have detained him longer; but St. Paul, having formed the plan of his progress in such manner as he judged most suitable to his main design, readily sacrificed the dictates of affection to the calls of duty, and persisted in his purpose to be at Jerusalem on the ap-

proaching passover. He took leave of them therefore with a promise of returning at a proper time; and, proceeding on his voyage, landed at Cæsarea, from whence he went to Jerusalem. His stay here was not long: having answered the design of his journey, and conversed with the brethren, he revisited the places where he had formerly preached, and went first to Antioch, and from thence through the provinces of Galatia and Phrygia. In this circuit he lost no time, but published the glad tidings of salvation, and confirmed the hearts of the disciples, wherever he came.

While he was on this service, there came to Ephesus a Jew of Alexandria, named Apollos. He had been as yet only instructed in the rudiments of the faith, so far as was communicated by the teaching and baptism of John; but though his knowledge was not extensive, his zeal was lively and fervent; and, having a prompt elocution, and great readiness in the Scriptures, he preached concerning Christ with much freedom and earnestness, according to the measure of light he had received. Aquila and Priscilla were amongst his hearers, and having more experience and knowledge than himself, they easily perceived wherein he was deficient, and, with candour and tenderness, instructed him farther. This passage is worthy the notice both of preachers and hearers. What Apollos had learnt he willingly communicated; what he was yet ignorant of, he as willingly received when proposed to him: his zeal and humility went hand in hand. This is an amiable and thriving character. The man who is faithful to present light, and open to farther conviction, will soon be wise and successful; the Lord will provide him both teachers and hearers; he shall profit others, and be profited himself every day. The prudence and moderation of

Aquila and Priscilla are no less commendable. They did not acquiesce in all he said because he was eloquent and mighty in the Scriptures; neither did they reject and disdain him because they knew more than he, much less expose and revile him as a low, ignorant preacher; but they spoke to him in private; they approved what was right, and showed him mildly and faithfully wherein he was defective; they commended his zeal, and improved his knowledge. With these advantages, and letters of recommendation to the brethren, he went from thence to Corinth, where he was highly serviceable to the church, publicly maintaining and proving, against the Jews, with great earnestness of spirit and strength of argument, that Jesus was the Messiah.

Not long after his departure,* Paul, having completed his progress through the upper or interior parts of Asia Minor, returned, according to his promise, to Ephesus. Here he found some more disciples, who, like Apollos, though acquainted with the doctrine and baptism of John, were hitherto strangers to those peculiar gifts, graces, and comforts, which, as the fruits of the Holy Spirit, were bestowed on the believers in Jesus; but, by the imposition of the apostle's hands, they were immediately made partakers of the same benefits.

A. D. 55.] The apostle, unwilling to give up his own people, the Jews, continued his labours of love among them for three months, if, by any means, he might bring them to the acknowledgement of the truth; but at length perceiving that, instead of yielding, they hardened themselves still more, and obstinately laboured to traduce and defame the

* Acts, xix.

Author and way of salvation before the people, he finally desisted; and, selecting those who had received the Gospel from the many who might hinder and confuse them, he formed them into a society among themselves. He continued daily to preach and defend the Gospel for two years afterwards, in a public school, with indefatigable zeal and diligence, seconding his more stated services with occasional and pressing exhortations from house to house, and watering the seed with many prayers and tears. His labours were not in vain; he had great success, not only in the city of Ephesus, but amongst many, who, resorting thither from other parts, and with different views, were providentially led to hear him, and being divinely convinced themselves, carried home the joyful tidings with them; so that the knowledge of the Gospel was generally spread throughout the province. The attention of the people was still farther excited, and their prejudices softened, by the numerous displays and visible tendency of that divine power, by which the Lord confirmed the words of his servant. Many striking miracles, emblematical of the healing efficacy of Gospel grace, were wrought by the most inconsiderable means: so that persons afflicted with various maladies, or possessed by evil spirits, were perfectly restored to health, by the application of handkerchiefs or aprons that had touched his body.

Among the various methods by which the Gospel has been opposed, one is, by a feeble imitation, and a pretended acknowledgement, of some of its principles, while the heart is unacquainted or unaffected with the design and scope of the whole doctrine. Enmity, or at best, interest, is often the spring of many attempts that are veiled under a fair profession of good words; but such attempts

will always issue in the disappointment or confusion of those who venture on them. An instance of this kind happened at Ephesus. Some vagrant Jews, who made claim to a power of exorcising or dispossessing evil spirits, struck with the miracles wrought in the name of Jesus, presumed to adopt this sacred name into the number of their professed mysteries; and, meeting with a subject for the exercise of their art, they undertook to adjure the evil spirit to depart from a man, by the name of Jesus whom Paul preached. But the man under the influence of the evil spirit, insulted and exposed them: he acknowledged the authority of Jesus and the fidelity of Paul; but, demanding farther who they were that durst make free with these names, far from obeying their summons, he fiercely assaulted them, and forced them, though seven in number, to flee for their lives, naked, wounded, and terrified. Great indeed is the power of the name of Jesus; but when not pronounced by faith, it is spoken in vain: Satan laughs at such vain pretenders, and prevails against them. So, when those who are destitute of faith undertake to write or preach concerning Jesus, it will seldom prove to more purpose than if they attempted to exorcise the people. Instead of delivering others from the power of Satan, they are more and more subjected to him themselves; and, unless the grace of God interposes to teach them better, their latter end is usually worse than their beginning.

This public defeat of the enemy added to the triumph of the Gospel and the honour of the apostle, and produced a reverence and awe in the hearts of many, convincing them of the power of evil spirits when not restrained, and the danger of trifling with the name or ministry of Christ; and many who had been addicted to the magic

arts (for which Ephesus was peculiarly infamous) renounced their delusions, confessed their folly and wickedness to the apostle, made public profession of the Gospel, and, in proof that their faith and repentance were sincere, brought the books containing the secrets and principles of their pretended skill, and publicly committed them to the flames. These were either so numerous, or so dear, that the value was computed at fifty thousand pieces of silver. What this sum might be in our money the learned are not agreed; the lowest calculations fix it at about fifteen hundred pounds, while some compute it at more than seven thousand. We are not, however, sure they were all on the subject of magic: a variety of other disquisitions might possibly contribute to enlarge the pile. Curious books and curious arts had been multiplied: but the one book of truth now made the rest useless and tasteless. They had now found the pearl of great price, and willingly parted with their once admired pebbles; and we may believe, that if the worth and power of the holy Scriptures were once generally known, many curious libraries in our days, if they escaped unburnt, would, at least, remain unread and unnoticed. When the wise thus renounced their wisdom, and the artful their gain, burnt their books with their own hands, and devoted themselves to the study of the Scriptures alone, it is once more observed, "So mightily grew the word "of God, and prevailed!"

A. D. 57.] The apostle, of whom it may be said, with more propriety than of Cæsar, that he accounted nothing done while any thing remained to do, in the midst of his important engagements at Ephesus was still meditating new services. He retained a warm affection and care for his friends

in different, distant, and opposite quarters. He had thoughts of revisiting Macedonia and Greece, and, from thence, once more to go to Jerusalem; and, not content with reviewing his past labours, he longed to preach in places he had not yet seen—saying, "After I have been there, I must also see "Rome:" nor was Rome the boundary of his views, for from thence he proposed to proceed to Spain.* We are taught from our infancy to admire those who, in the language of the world, are styled great captains and conquerors, because they burned with a desire to carry slaughter and terror into every part of the globe, and to aggrandize their names, by the depopulation of countries, and the destruction of their species, while this generous spirit of St. Paul is almost totally overlooked. Unwearied by difficulties, undismayed by dangers, unsatisfied with the greatest success, unaffected with the justest applause, he seemed to lay his benevolent schemes wide as the human race. He reaped no profit, he sought no praise, he rejected the allurements of pleasure (to which the greatest conquerors have often been irresolute slaves), he endured the reproach and contempt of the people, which no hero but the true Christian was ever strong enough to bear with patience, and all this only to make others partakers of the happiness which he enjoyed himself. However, finding it necessary to continue some time longer where he was, he dispatched his beloved Timothy to Macedonia, to apprise his friends of his intention, and to prepare them for his visit, when a proper opportunity should permit.

In the mean time, an incident fell out which well illustrates the causes and genius of that op-

* Rom. xv. 24.

position and outcry which is usually made when the power of Gospel-truth interferes with the passions and interests of designing men. St. Paul's great success, and the additions daily made to the church of Christ, had a visible tendency to lessen the estimation and gain of those whose chief resource was in the ignorance and wickedness of the people. These were not backward to take the alarm, and had been waiting an opportunity to show their resentment. The Lord, who holds all hearts in his own hands, had restrained them hitherto, that his work of grace might not be disturbed; but when the apostle was upon the point of departure, this restraint was in some measure taken off. The temple of Diana, at Ephesus, was celebrated for its magnificence far and near, so that many shrines or models of it were made for sale, and in much demand. This branch of business brought in considerable gain to the silversmiths and other mechanics; but if the Gospel of Christ continued to spread, it was highly probable that these, with many other such toys, would be little inquired after. Demetrius, a leading man amongst them, convening his brethren and dependants, and as many as he could whose interest seemed most immediately affected by this novel doctrine, harangued them with much address and influence on a point in which they had so near and mutual a concern. He reminded them with seasonable frankness, that their gain was at stake;* this was the main argument; yet, as one not

* This is the main objection against the Gospel, though pretexts are industriously sought to hide it. It alarms those who thrive by the ignorance or wickedness of the times: gain is the motive, the honour of Diana the plea. But it may be easily proved, that such occupations as are endangered by the success of the Gospel, are in themselves injurious to the peace and good order of civil society.

wholly governed by mercenary views, he expressed a very tender concern for the honour of Diana, lest her worship and their advantage should cease together, as they certainly would, if this Paul should be peaceably suffered to persuade the people, that they can be no gods which are made with hands. An appeal to the two prevailing passions of mankind, interest and superstition, is seldom made in vain. The arguments of Demetrius have been employed a thousand times over against the Gospel, though all opposers have not had his honesty, in avowing their leading motive. The doctrine which discountenances folly and wickedness will certainly be defamed and resisted by all who find their account in promoting them; but as this motive is rather invidious, if insisted on alone, they express likewise an earnest zeal for whatever tenets have the sanction of authority, antiquity, or custom, with which their private interest is inseparably connected. He had said enough to inflame his hearers; and these were sufficiently numerous to stimulate the unthinking rabble, who, though quiet till they are headed by artful leaders, are easily roused to rage and tumult when thus influenced, as the sea, that has been long calm, obeys the impulse of the rising gale. The outcry begun by Demetrius and his companions, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians," was soon resounded through the city, and the multitude, being informed that their established religion, their stately temple, and costly rites were all in danger, rushed from all parts tumultuously into the public theatre, dragging two of St. Paul's dear companions, Gaius and Aristarchus, along with them, perhaps with a design to throw them to the wild beasts, which were kept for the barbarous diversion of the people at their public

games. The apostle, warmly concerned for his friends' safety, and confiding in the goodness of his cause, and the providence of his God, was not intimidated by this violent uproar, but purposed to face the enraged mob; but the earnest solicitations of the disciples, who could not but be anxious for the event, restrained him; and even some who had not received his doctrine, from a regard to what they knew of his character and conduct, employed their endeavours to preserve him. These, in the text, are styled Asiarchs, persons of note who presided in the regulation of the games. Some of them sent to inform him, that in the present confusion it was not in their power to protect him from violence, and therefore desired he would keep in safety. Though his resolution was not shaken, yet judging this might be a providential intimation, that it was not his duty at that time to expose himself, he desisted. The mob, thus disappointed with respect to him, and secretly restrained fro mhurting the others, continued in the utmost confusion, though few knew why they were assembled, unless it was to join in the cry, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians," which they repeated without intermission, for two hours. When they had thus exhausted themselves, and their passions, through weariness, began to subside, a public officer of the city seized the favourable moment to expostulate with them concerning their behaviour. He spoke with freedom and address, but with that indifference which the wise men of the world so frequently discover in religious concerns. Many deserve commendation for their readiness to allow others the peaceable possession of their own sentiments, who, at the same time, call for our pity, that they have no inclination or leisure to inquire for themselves. He

allowed, in general terms, the honours of Diana, and pleaded in behalf of the men, that they had not spoke against Diana in particular or intermeddled with her temple.* This was probably true in fact. St. Paul declared the folly of idolatry in general; but did not enter into direct confutation of any detached part of the Heathen mythology: he proposed the plain truth of the Gospel, and when this was received, the whole system of idol worship fell to the ground of itself. He farther reminded them, that if they had any just cause of complaint, they ought to seek redress in a course of law;† and then hinting at the consequences they were liable to, if called to a strict account‡ for their riot, he prevailed on them to separate and depart quietly. Thus the apostle, though threatened with a most imminent and formidable danger, was preserved unhurt, and suffered neither in his person nor character: an encouraging proof, that those who act in the path of duty, and depend on the power of God, are equally safe in all times and circumstances; no less safe, when surrounded by enraged enemies, than when encircled by kind and assiduous friends.

He did not continue long at Ephesus after this

* "Are neither robbers of churches," ver. 37. should rather be rendered *robbers of temples;* for though the word church is now expressive of some particular places of worship, it is never, in the New Testament, applied to buildings, but to persons only.

† The servants of Christ will seldom be compelled to answer for themselves in a course of law, except in those places where sanguinary laws are contrived purposely against them. In default of these, their adversaries will often stoop to appeal from the magistrate to the mob.

‡ It seems, however, there was no more said of it. It had been a notorious breach of the peace; but then it had been against St. Paul and his companions, who had sufficient favour shown them if they came off with their lives. In any other case, such a tumult would have been deemed a high offence.

tumult; but taking leave of the disciples, he went to Troas, and from thence (as he had purposed) to Macedonia.* We have but little account of this progress in the history of the Acts; but from some passages of his epistles,† written about that time, we are informed that his exercises and trials, both inward and outward, were very great. His solicitous affection for the churches was far from being the smallest source of his troubles, and cost him many‡ a pang: he loved them in the bowels of Jesus Christ; he could willingly have devoted his labours and life to each of them, but he could not be with them all; and knowing the weakness of the heart, the subtilty of Satan, and the obvious temptations arising from the fear of man, the love of the world, and the arts of false teachers, he was jealous over those from whom he was absent with a godly jealousy.§ At Troas, he expected to have met with Titus, on his return from Macedonia; but missing him, though he had favourable opportunities of preaching the Gospel at‖ Troas, his mind was not at liberty to improve them, but he hasted to be in Macedonia, that he might the sooner be satisfied. There he tells us himself, he had no rest, but was troubled on every

* Acts, xx. † 2 Cor. ii. 12, 13, and vii. 5.

‡ See 2 Cor. xi. 28. "That which cometh on me daily." The word is επισυστασις; and gives the idea of a camp or castle hard beset with continual onsets and assaults; or of a man who has his way to force through a great crowd that are coming to meet him; so that he must not only be much encumbered and hindered, but, unless he exerts himself to the utmost, is in danger of being trampled under their feet. By this lively figure the apostle describes the part he took in the welfare of all the churches. His cares on their behalf were so numerous, urgent, and continual, that they found full employment for his prayers, his thoughts, and his time.

§ 2 Cor. xi. 2. ‖ 2 Cor. ii. 2, 13.

side; without were fightings, within were fears; but he speaks of it as a seasonable and gracious interposition of that God, whose character* and prerogative it is to be a comforter of those that are cast down; that in these circumstances he was comforted by the coming of Titus, who relieved his fears by the favourable account he brought him from Corinth.

A. D. 58.] How long hes taid in these parts we are not told, but, in general, that he spent some time and visited many places; and it seems to have been in this circuit that he preached at Illyricum, a part of which country borders upon Macedonia. He afterwards proceeded to Greece, where he staid three months. He intended to have embarked from thence at some port, and to have proceeded immediately to Syria by sea; but upon information that his restless enemies, the Jews, were plotting to intercept and kill him, he determined to return through Macedonia. Several of his friends offered to accompany him through Asia, who, embarking before him, waited for him at Troas, where he, at a convenient time, joined them from Philippi, and remained there seven days.

On the first day of the week they had a solemn assembly; and St. Paul, who was to take a long and last farewel of the disciples there the next morning, indulged his own and their affections, by protracting his discourses and advices beyond the usual bounds: he spent the whole day, even till midnight, in expatiating upon the pleasing topics of redeeming love. This does not, indeed, appear to have been his usual practice; but should a company of believers now spend a night together in the exercise they best love, though it were but

* 2 Cor. vii. 6.

once, and when they had no expectation of meeting again till they should meet in glory, it would be sufficient to open the mouths of prejudice and slander against them, as regardless of the order of families, and the duties of common life. Particular notice is taken, that they had many lights in the upper chamber where they were met, perhaps to remind us that the first Christians were careful to conduct their assemblies with order and propriety, so as to give no just cause of offence; yet their enemies quickly began to charge them with meeting in the dark, and invented many false and wicked slanders upon that supposition. The like falsehoods have been often repeated. A young man of the company, either less attentive or less warmly engaged than the rest, dropped asleep, and not only lost much of an invaluable opportunity, but fell out of a window in which he was seated, from the third story, and was taken up, to appearance, dead: an incident which might have given those who hated the apostle a farther occasion to clamour, and to revile his unseasonable zeal; but he went down, in the spirit of faith and prayer, and embracing the young man, restored him to his friends alive. After they were recovered from the hurry of this event, and had taken some refreshment, he resumed his discourse, and continued in conference * with them till the break of day, when he bid them farewel.

* This, as we have observed, was upon a particular occasion; they expected to see each other no more, and hardly knew how to part. The like circumstances might justify such protracted meetings of Christian friends still; but, in general, they are to be avoided. If frequently indulged, they would break in upon other things, indispose those who attend for the ordinary duties of their stations, be prejudicial to health, and, for these and other reasons, prove a cause of offence.

His companions went along the coast, by shipping, to Assos, a place not very distant, and to which the apostle chose to go by land, and on foot. Some think he did this by way of self-denial: but it is not likely that he, who was the great asserter of evangelical and filial liberty, would lay any stress upon such singularities. Self may readily submit to many things of this sort, and derive food, complacence, and strength from them. It is more probable he chose to walk, either that he might embrace occasions of service by the way, or for the advantage of leisure and retirement; for Christians engaged in a very public sphere of life (as he was) are glad to redeem opportunities of being alone, at the price of some inconveniences. But this circumstance is mentioned as characterizing the simplicity of his spirit: though greatly honoured and greatly beloved, he thought it not beneath him to walk from place to place, like an obscure person.

Embarking at Assos, and having touched at Mitylene and Samos, intermediate places, they arrived, in a few days, at Miletus. St. Paul purposely passed Ephesus, that he might not be detained or grieved by the many dear friends he had in that city; for he was resolved, if possible, to be at Jerusalem on the approaching day of Pentecost; but from Miletus he sent for the elders or bishops of the church at Ephesus, to receive his final charge and benediction. When they came, he addressed them in a solemn and affectionate discourse. The substance of it, which is recorded for our instruction, if considered only as a piece of oratory, has been often admired and celebrated by critics: but there are strokes in it, the force and beauty of which no critic can truly relish, except he has tasted of

the same spirit which filled and animated the apostle's heart when he spoke it.

He began with an appeal to themselves concerning his conduct while resident among them, and reminded them of the diligence, fidelity, and tenderness which he had manifested in the course of his ministry; how he had seconded his public instructions with private and repeated exhortations, watering them both with many prayers and tears. He informed them of the object and service of his present journey, and how uncertain he was what the issue might prove to himself. But though he had general intimations from the Spirit of God to expect afflictions and bonds in every place, his determination was fixed: he had counted the cost, and saw that nothing he could meet with was worth his serious thought, so that he might be able to fulfil his ministry with honour, and to finish his course with joy;* but this, he said, he was assured of, that the pleasing opportunities he had enjoyed with the believers at Ephesus, and in that neighbourhood, were ended, and that they now saw and heard him for the last time. Only those who know the endeared affection that subsists between a minister of Christ and those to whom God has made him the instrument of saving their souls, can judge of the emotion with which he spoke, and his

* The state of obedience and service which we owe to him who died for us and rose again, is often compared to a race or course; by which is intimated the assiduity with which we ought to pursue our calling, the brevity of our labours and sufferings, the little attention we should pay to objects around us, and that our eye and aim should be constantly directed to the prize set before us. Every step in this race is attended with trouble, but the end will be unspeakable joy. Those to whom the King shall say, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the "joy of thy Lord!" will not then complain of the difficulties they met by the way.

friends heard this part of his discourse. When he had thus touched and engaged their tenderest passions, and prepared them to receive his parting solemn charge with a due attention, he exhorted them, in the most animated terms, to follow his example, in performing the part of faithful overseers, or bishops, in the church which he now committed to their care; suggesting two most powerful motives, the consideration that they were appointed to this office by the Holy Ghost, and that the souls intrusted to them were the church of God, which he had purchased with his own blood. He likewise warned them, that the utmost circumspection would be needful; for that he foresaw that after his departure, grievous wolves would enter amongst them, not sparing the flock, and also that, out of their own number of professed disciples, men should arise speaking perverse things. This double danger of false teachers from without, and restless curious spirits within the fold, all societies of Christians are exposed to; and it is a strong call to ministers, in all ages, to be mindful of the apostle's charge, and to take heed to the flock over which the Holy Ghost has made them overseers. He again put them in remembrance of his own conduct, his assiduity and disinterestedness; that he had not sought his own advantage, but had rather wrought with his own hands, that he might not be chargeable to them. Finally, commending them to God, and the word of his grace, he closed his discourse, with proposing to their consideration an aphorism of our Lord Jesus, and illustrated by the whole tenor of his life: "It is more blessed to "give than to receive." This sentiment, so highly expressive of the spirit of the Divine Author, which had been hitherto preserved in the hearts and mouths of his disciples, was, upon this occasion,

inserted into the written word, and is the only authentic tradition concerning him which has been transmitted to the church. Having finished his pathetic address, he kneeled down and prayed with them. The final farewel was very affecting; for how could those who owed him their souls, who had been so often comforted and edified by his instructions and example, consider that they were to see him no more in this world, without being greatly moved? They accompanied him to the ship, and then returned. The word which Luke the historian makes use of upon this occasion, intimates that the concern was mutual; it signifies, to draw asunder by force, to separate things joined together. "When we had gotten from them," or, as it might be rendered, "When we had torn ourselves from them," well expresses the close union of their affections, and the sorrow and reluctance which both sides felt at parting.

When this struggle * was over, St. Paul and his company put to sea with a favourable gale, and, having touched at Coos and Rhodes, two islands of note in the Ægean sea, continued their course to Patara in Lycia, where they seasonably met with a ship upon the point of departure for Phœnicia, and embarking in her, they passed on the south side of Cyprus, and had a safe voyage to Tyre, which being the destined port of the vessel, they landed. As he was now not very far distant from Jerusalem, and had finished that part of his voyage in which he was most exposed to unavoidable delays, by the occurrences of winds and weather, so that he had a fair probability of reaching Jerusalem within his prescribed time, he consented to stay seven

* Acts xxi.

days with some disciples * he found there. From some of these he received an intimation, by a prophetic impulse, of the dangers he would be exposed to if he went to Jerusalem; but he knew whom he had believed, and being convinced that his duty called him to persevere, he was not intimidated by a prospect of suffering. At the appointed time he embarked again, the disciples with their families accompanying him to the water-side, where he took leave of them in an affectionate prayer upon the sea shore. † He landed next at Ptolemais, a city of Galilee, and staid one day with the brethren there. The next day he proceeded to Cæsarea, and lodged at the house of Philip the deacon, who had four daughters endued with the spirit of prophecy.

During his stay at Cæsarea, a prophet named Agabus came down from Jerusalem, and agreeably to the manner of the ancient prophets, who frequently enforced their declarations by expressive signs and actions, he bound his own hands and feet with the apostle's girdle, assuring them, in the name of the Holy Spirit, that in the same manner the Jews would bind the hands and feet of the man to whom that girdle belonged, and deliver him up as a criminal to the Roman power. Upon these repeated premonitions of what he was to expect,

* Ver. 4. Ανευροντες τους μαθητας might be rendered, "finding out the disciples." There seems no reason for suppressing the article, and the verb is used for finding out, in consequence of some description or inquiry, Luke, ii. 16. We readily suppose, from the apostle's character, that his first inquiry upon coming to any place where the Gospel had been preached, related to those who loved the Lord Jesus, and how they were to be met with.

† Could many persons now living have seen this, without doubt they would have said, they had seen a strange company of enthusiasts and fanatics.

not only the disciples of Cæsarea, but those who had come with him, earnestly entreated him to desist from his purpose. We may learn from this passage, that the clearest intelligence of approaching danger is not always a sufficient warrant to decline it, even when, in the judgement of our brethren, we might decline it without sin. St. Paul was satisfied that, all circumstances considered, it was right for him to proceed. He had taken his determination upon good grounds, was brought so far on his way in safety: and to be told, though from an infallible authority, that his views of service could not be completed without great risk and trouble to himself, did not discourage him in the least. He was less affected by the prospect of sufferings from the Jews than by the solicitations of his friends; and told them, that though they could not shake his resolution, their concern and importunity exceedingly distressed him. "What mean you to weep, and to break my "heart? I am ready not to be bound only, but "also to die, for the sake of the Lord Jesus." In this short speech we may discern a spirit which is indeed the honour of human nature. Inflexibly firm to his character and duty, yet expressing the most tender feelings for his friends; while he contemplated the severest trials that might affect himself unmoved, he was almost overpowered by what he felt for others. But when they saw that he was not to be dissuaded, they desisted from their suit, and acquiesced in the will of the Lord.

A. D. 59.] Having staid some time at Cæsarea, he proceeded to Jerusalem; his friends, who had crossed the sea with him, resolving to expose themselves to a share of the dangers from which they could not divert him. They were accompanied likewise by an old disciple, named Mnason,

of Cyprus, who resided at Jerusalem, and had offered his house for their accommodation. Their arrival was welcome to the brethren; and the next day St. Paul introduced his friends to St. James and the elders, who seem to have met together on purpose to receive him. To them he gave a succinct account of the success with which God had honoured his ministry among the Gentiles; which when they had heard, they unanimously glorified God on his behalf, and rejoiced to hear of the accession of such numbers to the Christian faith.* But at the same time they gave him to understand, that the bulk of the Jewish converts had received no small prejudice against him: that there were even many thousands who had heard and believed hard things of him, as one who taught the Jews to apostatize from the law of Moses, and forbade them to practise circumcision and the other rites and customs of their forefathers. In order to show them that this charge was groundless, they advised him to join himself publicly with four men, who were under a vow, and to attend with them the prescribed course of purification in the temple.

From this passage we are led to remark, that, through the weakness of human nature, the prejudices of education, and the arts of Satan, many thousands of professed Christians, in the first and purest period of the primitive church, while under the care of the apostles, had imbibed, from hearsay, a degree of coldness and dislike towards one of the Lord's most faithful and most favoured servants. How far the method St. Paul was advised to pursue, for the removal of this misapprehension, was suited to his character and known integrity, is

* Acts, xxi.

a question not easily determined. The apostles, considered in one light, as the penmen of a large part of the sacred canon of faith and practice, which the Lord was pleased by them to communicate to his church, were doubtless so far under the full direction and inspiration of his Holy Spirit; but we have no reason to believe that, in every part of their own personal conduct, they were strictly infallible: nay, we have good warrant to conclude the contrary; as St. Paul himself assures us, that, upon a certain occasion, already mentioned, he withstood Peter to his face, because he was to be blamed. It is therefore no way derogatory from the character and authority of Paul, to inquire whether, upon this occasion, the tenderness of his spirit towards weak believers, and his desire of becoming all things to all men (when the foundation-truths of the Gospel were not affected) might not carry him too far. For though a reserve was made by James, in favour of the Gentile converts, that they should not be burdened with the observance of Jewish rites; yet the express end and design for which this step was proposed to him, and for which he seems to have undertaken it, was, that all might know or believe, not only that he was not against others adhering to the Jewish ceremonies, but that he likewise orderly and statedly practised them himself: a circumstance which is far from being clear, or indeed probable, if we consider the strain of his Epistle to the Galatians, which, though the addition at the close of our copies mentions as sent from Rome, is generally allowed to have been written during his stay at Ephesus at the latest, if not sooner; and further, that for some time past his converse had been almost wholly confined to the Gentile believers, or to those churches of which they formed

the largest part. If he became as a Jew amongst the Jews, it was, as he says himself, only with the hope of gaining * the Jews; which motive could no longer take place when he had finally withdrawn from their synagogues. Those therefore who suppose that, in this instance, he was over-persuaded to deviate from that openness of conduct which he generally maintained, seem to have some ground for their suspicion. This, however, is certain, his temporizing did not answer the proposed end, but instead of rendering him more acceptable, involved him in the greatest danger; for when the seven days were almost fulfilled, some Jews of Asia seeing him in the temple, pointed him out to the multitude as the dangerous man who had apostatized from his religion, and was using his endeavours, wherever he went, to draw people from the worship of God according to the law of Moses. To this they added, that he had profaned the holy place, by bringing Gentiles with him into the temple. This they conjectured from having seen Trophimus, an Ephesian, with him in the city. This part of the charge was wholly false; he had not brought his Gentile friends into the temple, but he appeared so publicly with them upon other occasions, as to give some room for a surmise of this sort. If he submitted to the proposal of the elders, and attended in the temple himself, for the satisfaction of the Jewish converts, he would not go so far as to be ashamed of his friends, to make himself more acceptable to his enemies. It is our duty to avoid giving just offence; but if we boldly and honestly avow the Lord's people upon all proper occasions, without regard to names and parties, we

* 1 Cor. ix. 20.

must expect to suffer from the zealots of all sides.

Those who first laid hands on him were soon assisted by great numbers, for the whole city was moved, and the people ran together from all quarters. They dragged him out of the temple, and were upon the point of killing him, without giving him time or leave to speak a word for himself. They thought him absolutely in their power, but they were prevented by the appearance of Lysias, a Roman officer, who had a post near the temple, to prevent or suppress insurrections. Upon the first notice he received of this disturbance, he came down with a party of soldiers. The evangelist observes, that when the Jews ran to kill Paul, the Romans ran to save him. Thus the succour the Lord provides for his people is always proportioned to the case, and effectual to the end. When danger is pressing, relief is speedy. Lysias, though ignorant of the cause of this tumult, judging by its violence that the apostle must have been some great malefactor, commanded him to be bound with two chains, and, when he could obtain no satisfactory information from the people, had him removed to the castle, or Roman station; but such was the violence of the incensed unmeaning multitude, that the soldiers were constrained to carry him in their arms up the steps, or stairs, which led thither from the temple. Here Paul obtained leave to speak for himself; the tribune inclining rather to a more favourable opinion of him, when he found he could speak Greek; and the people attended with some composure, when they heard him address them in the Hebrew or Syriac language.

In his discourse* he told them, that he had been brought up amongst themselves; and appealing to the high-priest and elders concerning the zeal and earnestness with which he had formerly served their party, he related the extraordinary dispensation by which the Lord Jesus had conquered his heart. This was St. Paul's usual method of defence; and though no means are sufficient to reach the heart without a divine influence, yet, humanly speaking, a simple and faithful declaration of what God has done for our souls, seems most likely to convince, or at least to soften and silence, those who oppose. Enraged as the Jews had been, they listened with patience to his relation, till he proceeded to intimate the Lord's designs in favour of the Gentiles, and that he was appointed an apostle to them. Accustomed to despise the rest of mankind, and to deem themselves the only people of God, they could not bear this: they interrupted him instantly; and with one voice, declared it was not fit such a fellow should live upon the earth. They cast off their clothes, threw dust in the air, and their fury seemed to deprive them of their reason. Lysias, the tribune, secured him from their violence; but commanded him to be examined by scourging, that he might know his crime from his own mouth; according to a barbarous custom of putting those to torture against whom there was no sufficient evidence, that their own extorted confession might furnish some grounds of proceeding against them: a custom still prevalent in most countries called Christian, though contrary to religion, to reason, and to the common sentiments of humanity. Our Lord

* Acts, xxii.

Jesus was examined in this manner before Pilate; and, though the apostle was ready to follow the steps of his Master in suffering, yet, upon this occasion, he pleaded his right of exemption from such treatment, as being a native of Tarsus, a city honoured with the freedom of Rome. A Roman citizen was not legally liable either to be bound or scourged: therefore, when the tribune understood his privileges, he stopped farther proceedings, and was something apprehensive for himself, that he had in part violated them already, by ordering him to be bound; * but being still desirous to know what was laid to his charge, he convened the chief priests and the members of the Sanhedrim on the next day, and brought him again before them.

The apostle, fixing his eyes upon the high priest and council, as one who was neither ashamed nor afraid † to appear at their tribunal, began with a declaration that he had lived to that day in the exercise of a good conscience; but Ananias, the high priest, forgetting his character as a judge, commanded those who stood near to strike him on the face. The apostle severely rebuked his partiality, in perverting the cause of justice, and warned him of the righteous judgement of God, the supreme Judge, who would surely punish his hypocrisy. ‡ His reply to those who reproved him for speaking in such terms to the high priest, seems to intimate, that the injurious treatment he had re-

* A Roman citizen might be bound with a chain, but not tied with thongs, or beaten with rods. "Facinus est vinciri civem Ro-"manum, scelus verberari." CICERO.

† Acts, xxiii.

‡ "Thou whited wall!" A clay wall, glossed over with white, is an apt emblem of a man who carries on a malicious design under the pretence and forms of justice. Hateful is the character, and dreadfully dangerous the condition of such.

ceived had raised an undue warmth in his spirit; though it may be supposed that he denounced his future doom under a superior and prophetic impulse. But knowing that the council was composed of Pharisees and Sadducees, who were at variance amongst themselves about several weighty points, particularly the doctrine of a resurrection, he declared himself a Pharisee, and that the opposition he met with from the Sadducees was owing to his belief and hope in that doctrine. The Pharisees immediately suspended their present resentment, to embrace the occasion offered of opposing their old antagonists, and upon this issue espoused his cause, declaring him innocent; and said, that if a spirit or angel (the existence of both which the Sadducees denied) had spoken to him, they ought not to fight against God, by refusing to hear him. Upon this, a great dissension took place; and Lysias, fearing that Paul would be torn in pieces between the contending parties, put an end to the conference, and ordered the soldiers to take him by force and secure him in the castle. It is, indeed, often well for believers, that the people of the world, though agreed in one point, namely, to oppose the Gospel, are divided and subdivided in other respects; so that, for the sake of a favourite passion, or to cross an opposite interest, they will sometimes protect those whom they would otherwise willingly destroy.

The next night he received full amends for all he had suffered, and was confirmed against the utmost efforts of his enemies' malice; for the Lord Jesus, whom he served, vouchsafed to appear to him in a vision, commanded him to be of good cheer, owned his gracious acceptance of his late testimony in Jerusalem, and promised that none

should hinder him the honour of bearing witness to his truth at Rome likewise. The world has been sometimes surprised at the confidence which the faithful servants of Christ have shown in the midst of dangers, and in the face of death; but if their supports were known, the wonder would cease. If the Lord speaks, his word is effectual; and when he says, Be of good courage, and fear not! his people, out of weakness, are made strong.

Little were the incredulous Jews aware of what a power and vigilance were engaged in his preservation; and therefore, impatient of delays, they resolved to destroy him immediately. To manifest their resolution, and to quicken their diligence, more than forty of them bound themselves under the penalty of the great curse, or Anathema, not to eat or drink till they had killed him. They acquainted the priests and rulers with their engagement, and proposed, that they should request Lysias to order him once more to appear before them in council, and that then those who had combined in this oath would be ready to assassinate him. But no counsel or device can stand against the Lord. This black design was, by some means, providentially made known to a young man who was Paul's sister's son, who gave notice of it, first to him, and then, by his desire, to Lysias; who, finding the Jews implacably bent against Paul's life, determined to place him farther out of their reach, and accordingly sent him away, that same night, under a strong guard, who conducted him to Cæsarea, and delivered him to Felix, the Roman governor, together with a letter from Lysias, importing his care to preserve the prisoner, because he understood him to be a Roman citizen, and that he had commanded his accusers to follow. Thus the con-

spiracy, which his enemies had formed to destroy him, proved the occasion of his deliverance out of their hands.

In about five days afterwards, Ananias, the high priest, with the elders of the council, appeared * before Felix, against Paul. The charge was opened by Tertullus, a venal orator or advocate, whom they had retained for this purpose; who began with a commendation of the governor, in terms which might have suited the illustrious actions and wise measures of princes studious of the public good, but were ill applied to Felix (who was infamous for his cruelty and oppression), and in the name of the Jews who hated him. But enmity to the Gospel will make men stoop to the meanest flattery and servility, if, by that means, they have hope of gaining their point. The sum of the accusation was, that Paul was an enemy to church and state, a disturber of the established religion, and a mover of sedition against the government; to which was added, as a popular proof of the charge, that he was a ringleader of the sect or heresy of the Nazarenes, so called from Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified by a former governor for asserting himself to be a king. Thus much seems implied in the term Nazarene, as the Jews used it. The apostle began his defence with a protestation of his innocence, as to any design of moving sedition or tumult, which, he said, his enemies were unable to prove by a single fact. He proceeded to inform the governor of the true motives of their enmity against him, and acknowledged that he worshipped God in a way which they stigmatized with the name of heresy or division; for

* Acts, xxiv.

the proper* meaning of heresy is no more than sect or party. By farther declaring that he worshipped the God of his fathers, and believed all things written in the law and the prophets, he proved, from the object and the manner of his worship, that he was not guilty of any blameable innovations. He professed the hope of a resurrection, which his enemies could not but allow, and that it was his constant study † and endeavour to maintain a conscience void of offence; and added, that it was not he, but the Jews themselves, who had raised the tumult, by assaulting him when he was peaceably attending in the temple, according to the prescribed rules. He observed, that his first

* As the apostle only cautions Titus to reject or avoid a heretic (Tit. iii. 10), but has not defined him expressly, many writers and teachers have had a fair field to exercise their skill or their passions upon the subject; yet the question is far from determined to this day. Some would treat all those as heretics who differ from them, either in judgment or practice; others explain the word quite away, as though the admonition to avoid a heretic was wholly unnecessary. Perhaps the advice to Titus is nearly, if not exactly, equivalent to Rom. xvi. 17. The spirit of truth produces unity; the spirit of division is heresy. And the man who fiercely stickles for opinions of his own, who acts contrary to the peaceable, forbearing, humble spirit of the Gospel, who affects to form a party, and to be thought considerable in it, is so far a heretic.

† Acts, xxiv. 16. The Greek word here used (*ασκεω*) denotes the study, diligence, and proficiency of a person who is desirous to excel and be eminent in any particular art: as a painter, for instance; he searches out the best masters and the best pieces; he studies, and copies the beauties of others' works, and is continually retouching and improving upon his own: his acquaintance, reflections, and recreations, are all accommodated to his main purpose; and, though his pencil is sometimes at rest, his imagination is seldom idle. Similar to this is the exercise of a good conscience, formed upon the model of the Scripture, and improved by diligence, meditation, examination, and experience.

accusers were not present, as they ought to have been; and challenged any, who were within hearing, to prove their allegations in any one instance.

Felix, having, perhaps, a favourable opinion of the Christian profession, which had been settled some time at Cæsarea, and being likewise desirous of farther information, deferred the full discussion of the affair till the arrival of Lysias; and committed Paul, in the mean time, to the care of a centurion, as a prisoner at large; allowing him to go abroad in the city, and giving his friends liberty to visit him at home. And thus he was providentially delivered from the blood-thirsty Jews, and found an asylum in the Roman power, which they had endeavoured to engage for his destruction.

A. D. 60.] He was sent for, not long after, by Felix, and discoursed before him and his wife Drusilla, concerning the faith of Christ. Curiosity was the governor's motive; but the apostle, who knew his character, was faithful to him, and would not speak of the faith of Christ only to one who could not understand it, but made a home application, by enlarging on righteousness, temperance, and the important consequences of a future judgement. These were fit topics to press upon an unjust and rapacious governor, who lived in adultery, Drusilla, his reputed wife, having forsaken a lawful husband to live with him. She was by birth a Jewess, daughter of the Herod whose death we have already mentioned; and, having renounced her religion and her husband for Felix, was, by the judgement of God, given up to hardness of heart; so that it does not appear that the apostle's discourse made any impression upon her. It was otherwise with Felix, who, though a wicked man, had sinned against less light: he

trembled at what he heard; and, not able to conceal his concern, he cut short the interview, with a promise to send for him again at a convenient season. So great sometimes is the power of truth, when faithfully enforced! With this only advantage on his side, Paul, the prisoner, triumphs over a haughty governor, and makes him tremble. Great likewise is the power of sin! Felix trembled at the review of the past, and the prospect of the future; but he could not stop; he found some avocation for his present relief, and put off his most important concerns to a fitter opportunity, which, it is probable, never came. He saw and heard Paul afterwards; but the same man had no more the same influence; the accompanying force of the Spirit was withheld, and then he had no farther view in conversing with him, but the hope of receiving money for his enlargement. When the apostle had continued in this situation about two years, Felix was recalled from his government. He had governed the Jews with severity and injustice, and had reason to fear they would accuse him to the emperor; therefore, to ingratiate himself with them, he left Paul in his confinement, thinking that the detention of the person they hated might make them more readily excuse what was past; or, at least, he durst not provoke them farther by releasing him.

A. D. 62.] When Festus, who succeeded Felix in the government, went up to Jerusalem,* the high priest and elders applied to him, and requested that Paul might be sent thither to be tried before the council; and they appointed proper instruments to assault and murder him in their journey. It seems they expected this favour would be easily granted, as it is usual for governors, at

* Acts, xxv.

their first coming amongst a people, to do some popular act; but Festus refused, and commanded them to follow him to Cæsarea, where he himself would judge in the cause. The Jews accordingly exerted themselves in one more effort, and, when Festus was returned to Cæsarea, presented themselves before him on an appointed day; and Paul being brought into the court, they accused him heavily, as they had done before, and to as little effect, not being able to prove any thing against him, or to invalidate his protestation that he had committed no offence, either against the law or the temple, or the Roman government. Festus, who had refused to send him to Jerusalem before, was now willing to oblige them, perceiving the controversy was of a religious kind, and what he had little knowledge of; he therefore asked Paul, if he was willing to be tried, in his presence, before the council at Jerusalem. The apostle, who knew what treatment he might expect from the Jews, answered, that he was then at Cæsar's judgement-seat, where he ought to be tried, and that, if found guilty, he was not unwilling to suffer; but that against the proposal of being delivered up to those who thirsted for his blood, he appealed to Cæsar. This was one privilege of a Roman citizen, that, when he thought himself aggrieved in an inferior court, he might, by entering such an appeal, put a stop to proceedings, and refer the cause to the immediate determination of the emperor. From the example of St. Paul, who counted not his life dear, but was willing, not only to be bound, but to die for the Lord Jesus, we learn, that it is very allowable for a Christian to avail himself of the laws and privileges of his country, when unjustly persecuted for righteousness' sake: and perhaps, in some cases, it would

be blameable to omit it. Civil liberty is a *depositum* with which we are intrusted for posterity, and, by all lawful means, should be carefully preserved. Festus, after having consulted with his council and lawyers upon this unexpected turn, admitted the appeal, and determined he should be sent to Rome. Paul had long had a desire to visit the believers in that city, and had formed some plans concerning it. But it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps. His way was now opened in a manner he had not thought of; but in such a manner as made it more evident, that his bonds proved to the furtherance of the Gospel.

Soon after this, Agrippa, son of the late Herod, who had large territories, and the title of king, under the Romans, came with his sister Bernice, to congratulate Festus upon his accession to his government. He was a man of a fair character, a professed Jew, but possessed of moderation and prudence. During their stay, Festus informed them of what had lately happened concerning Paul. The whole that he understood of the affair was, that he had not been guilty of any crime; but that his accusers had certain questions against him of their own superstitions, and concerning one Jesus, who was dead, and whom Paul affirmed to be alive. To him the life and the death of Jesus were points of equal indifference: not so to those who believe he died for them, and who expect that because he lives, they shall live also. This imperfect account made Agrippa desirous to hear Paul himself; and, accordingly, the next day, Agrippa, Bernice, and Festus, being seated in* court, attended by their officers and train,

* The apology St. Paul made for himself was not his trial; he had already stopped all proceedings at law by his appeal to Cæsar; nor was Festus then as a judge upon his tribunal.

and a number of the principal people, Paul was once more brought forth * to speak in public for himself. On this occasion he addressed himself particularly to Agrippa; and, having expressed his satisfaction that he was permitted to speak before one who was so well acquainted with the laws and customs of the Jews, he related the cause of his present confinement. He professed his faith and hope in the Scriptures, and then, as he had done before, he gave him an account of the extraordinary means by which he had been changed from a † persecutor to a follower of Jesus, in his journey to Damascus. His defence therefore (as has been formerly observed) was rather experimental than argumentative, and made very different impressions upon his hearers. Festus, who seems to have had a good opinion of his sincerity and intention, yet, supposing no man in his sober senses could believe such a strange story, interrupted him in his narration, and, with an air, rather of pity than indignation, said, "Paul, thou "art beside thyself! Much learning hath made thee "mad!" ‡ A similar judgement is passed, by too

* Acts, xxvi.

† Speaking of his past conduct towards the disciples, he calls it *madness; being exceedingly,* or (as we express it) raging *mad against them.* A man in this state will assault any person he meets; he waits for no provocation, listens to no entreaty, regards no consequences. Thus the apostle judged of himself when a persecutor of the church; and the spirit of persecution in every age has been the same. May God restore those to their right minds who are governed by it!

‡ His answer to Festus is expressed with much accuracy and precision. "I am not mad, most noble Festus! but speak forth "(αποφθεγγομαι) the words of truth and soberness." Madness discovers itself either in the apprehension of a false object, or in the false apprehension of a true one. The things he spoke of were true in themselves, and his ideas of them just and proportionate.

many, upon all who profess an acquaintance with the life of faith in an unseen Jesus; but, ordinarily, now the effect is not ascribed to the excess of learning, but to the want of it: as, on the other hand, a man who maintains the wildest absurdities, puts his judgement and understanding to little hazard in the world's esteem, if his chimeras are set off with a competent apparatus of literature. Agrippa, however, was differently affected, especially when Paul made a bold appeal to himself, concerning the notoriety of the facts which had lately happened, and the truth of the prophecies with which they were connected. Here the power of truth triumphed again; and Agrippa was so struck, that, without regarding the numerous assembly, or the displeasure such a declaration might give both to Jews and Romans, particularly to Festus, who had expressed his sentiment just before, he gave way to the emotions of his mind, and said aloud, "Almost thou persuadest me to "be a Christian." Yet this was but an involuntary conviction; it did honour to the apostle, but was of no benefit to himself. And the concession which, at first view, seems to proceed from an ingenuous spirit, when closely examined, amounts but to this, that though Agrippa was, indeed, convinced of the truth, his heart was so attached to the present evil world, that he had neither courage nor will to follow it; as when we say of a picture, It looks almost alive, we do not mean, strictly, that there is any more life in the painting, than in the canvass on which it is drawn, but only that the resemblance is strong; so the almost Christian, however specious in his professions, is still destitute of that living principle which alone can enable him to make them good, and is, in reality, an utter stranger to true Christianity.

In the graceful return the apostle made to the king's acknowledgement, he hinted at this defect, wishing that both Agrippa, and all who heard him, were not only almost, but altogether, as he was himself, with an exception to the chains he wore for the cause of the Gospel. This answer discovers, in one view, the confidence he had in his cause, the happy frame of his mind, the engaging turn of his address, and his unbounded benevolence. He could wish nothing better, than what he himself felt, to his dearest friends, and he wished nothing worse to his greatest enemies; nay, he wished that his enemies might, if possible, experience all his comforts, without any of his trials. When Festus and Agrippa were withdrawn, they agreed in their opinion, that he had done nothing deserving of death, or even of imprisonment, and that he might have been released, if he had not himself prevented it by appealing to Cæsar.

In consequence of the determination to send him to Rome,* he was committed to the custody of a centurion named Julius, with whom he embarked in a vessel that was on a trading voyage to several parts of the Lesser Asia. Aristarchus, and some other of his friends went with him; and particularly the evangelist Luke, who seems to have been the inseparable companion of his travels from the first time he was at Troas. They touched the following day at Sidon, where the centurion gave him liberty to refresh himself, and visit his friends. At their next port, Myra, in Lycia, a vessel offering which was bound directly for Italy, they went on board her. In the beginning of this passage they were retarded by contrary winds. At length they reached the island of Crete (now called Candia); and having put into a port, called the Fair-havens, Paul

* Acts, xxvii.

would have persuaded them to have staid there, intimating that as the winter was now advancing, they would meet with many inconveniences and dangers, if they ventured to proceed any farther. Long voyages were seldom attempted during the winter in those days, or for many ages after, till the knowledge of the compass made way for those great improvements in navigation, which now embolden the mariner to sail indifferently at any season of the year. But, it is probable, the apostle's precaution was not merely founded upon the obvious disadvantages of the season, but rather upon an extraordinary pre-intimation of what was soon to happen. But his remonstrance was over-ruled, the centurion preferring the judgement of the master of the ship, who thought it best, if possible, to reach another haven at the west end of the island, which was thought to be more commodious and safe than the place Paul proposed. A favourable wind springing up from the south determined their resolves, and they set sail with a good confidence of soon reaching their desired port.

There is little doubt but Paul's case and character had, by this time, engaged the notice of many of his fellow-passengers in the ship. Upon a superficial inquiry, they would learn, that he was the follower of one Jesus, who had been crucified; that he was esteemed a setter-forth of strange gods, and charged with having disturbed the public peace wherever he came. He probably took frequent occasions to speak of his Lord and Master to those about him; and, as he had several companions, the manner of their social worship could hardly pass unobserved; but no emergency had as yet occurred to manifest the solidity and force of his principles to full advantage, and to make it evident to all with whom he sailed, that

his God was far unlike the idols of the Heathens; and that the religion which prompted him to do and suffer so much for the sake of Jesus, was founded not in the imaginations and inventions of men, but in reality and truth. In prosperous circumstances, most people are easily satisfied with their own principles, and are ready to take it for granted, that even the notions received from no better source than tradition or custom, cannot be wrong, or, at least, will not be dangerous; but it is in a season of uncommon distress that the truth and efficacy of vital religion appear with the most incontestable authority. The God who alone can deliver when all hope of safety is taken away, and the religion which can inspire a man with confidence and peace when there is nothing but dismay and confusion around him, will then extort some acknowledgement, even from those who had before thought of them with indifference. From these considerations we may collect one general reason why the Lord, who, by his divine providence, adjusts the time and circumstances of every event, and without whose permission not a sparrow can fall to the ground, permits his faithful people to be so often exercised with severe trials. It is to manifest that their hopes are well grounded; that they have not taken up with words and notions, but have a real and sure support, and can hope and rejoice in God under those pressures which deprive others of all their patience and all their courage: and on the other hand, to evince that his power and faithfulness are surely engaged on their behalf; that he puts an honour upon their prayers, is near to help them in the time of trouble, and can deliver them out of their greatest extremities. We are not then to wonder that this favoured servant of the Lord,

after having endured so many sufferings and hardships upon the land, was exposed, in the course of this voyage, to equal dangers and difficulties upon the sea; for they had not long quitted their last port before their hopes of gaining a better were blasted; they were overtaken by a sudden and violent storm. The name given it by the historian, Euroclydon, expresses its direction to have been from the eastern quarter, and its energy upon the waves. The tempest irresistibly overpowered the mariners, and rendered their art impracticable and vain. They were compelled to abandon the ship to the direction of the wind, and were hurried away they knew not whither. Mention is made of the difficulty they had to secure the ship's boat, as the only probable means of escaping if they should be wrecked, which yet, in the event, was wholly useless to them; likewise of their endeavours to strengthen the ship by girding her with ropes, and of their throwing a considerable part of the lading and tackling into the sea. In this distressed situation, expecting every hour to be either swallowed up by the waves, or dashed to pieces against unknown rocks or shores, they continued fourteen days. When they were almost worn out with hardship and anxiety, and there was no human probability of deliverance, the Lord manifested the care he had of his servants. The seamen had not seen sun or stars for many days; but his eye had been upon Paul and his companions every moment. No one on board could even conjecture into what part of the sea the ship was driven; but the Lord knew, and his angels knew; and now one was commanded to appear, to comfort the apostle, and to give him a word of comfort for all on board. Upon this, he addressed the people in the ship, exhorting them to take some food, and to be

of good courage; for that the God to whom he belonged, and whom he served, had given him assurance, by an angel, not only of his own safety, but that the lives of all on board should be preserved for his sake; that the ship would be cast upon a certain island; but he fully relied on the promise, that not one of them should be lost: he had been told that he must stand before Cæsar, which was a sufficient earnest of his preservation; for who, or what, can disappoint the purpose of God? Amidst all these threatening appearances, Paul was, in reality, as safe in the storm as Cæsar could be thought upon the throne. And thus all his servants are inviolably preserved by his watchful providence, so that neither elements nor enemies can hurt them, till the work he has appointed them is accomplished.

At length the seamen perceived indications that they were drawing near land; and when they were driven into a convenient depth of water, they cast anchor, and waited for the approach of day. In this interval the people were encouraged, by Paul's advice and example, to eat a hearty meal, by which their strength and spirits were recruited to sustain the fatigue they were yet to undergo. In the morning they saw an island, but knew it not. The mariners, regarding their own safety only, were about to make their escape in the boat; but Paul informing the soldiers that they could not be saved unless the seamen remained in the ship, they paid so much regard to his judgement as immediately to cut the ropes by which the boat was fastened, and give her up to the sea.

Their only remaining resource was to force the ship upon the shore, in a place where landing would be most practicable, and of this the mariners were the most proper judges. If this island

(as is generally supposed) was that which we now call Malta, we know that it is almost environed with rocks. They having therefore discovered an open bay, with a beach of sand or pebbles,* endeavoured to run the ship there; but had the management of this business been left to the soldiers and passengers, who were unexperienced in sea affairs, they might probably have let her drive at random against the rocks, where an escape would (humanly speaking) have been impossible. In this view we may observe, that the apostle's firm confidence in the promise he had received was connected with a prudent attention to the means in their power, from which the promise received was so far from dispensing them, that it was their chief encouragement to be diligent in employing them. This incident may be applied to points of more general importance, and, if carefully attended to, might have determined or prevented many unnecessary and perplexing disputes concerning the divine decrees, and their influence on the contingencies of human life. What God has appointed shall surely come to pass, but in such a manner, that all the means and secondary causes, by which he has determined to fulfil his designs, shall have their propre place and subserviency. Accordingly they made the best of their way to the shore; but, before they quite reached it, the ship was stopped by a point or bank,† where her fore part stuck

* "They discovered a certain creek, with a shore." But there was a shore all round the island. Αιγιαλος does not express the sea coast in general, or a rocky, craggy shore, but the skirts of an open bay, convenient for launching, landing, or drawing a net for fish. See Matt. xiii. 2. 48. John, xxi. 4. A mariner who understood Greek would, perhaps, render the sentence thus—"They observed a certain bay, with a beach." And this they chose as the most likely place to get safe to land.

† Τοπον διθαλασσον is rendered, in our version, "a place

fast, and remained immoveable, but the stern, or hinder part, was presently broken by the violence of the surges. In the general confusion, the soldiers, unmindful how much they were indebted to Paul, proposed that all the prisoners should be killed without distinction, lest they should be accountable if any of them escaped; but the centurion, who interested himself in his preservation, rejected the motion, and commanded every one to do what they could for their own safety. Many who could swim cast themselves into the sea; the rest availed themselves of planks and broken pieces of the ship; and the merciful providence of the Lord gave their endeavours success, so that the whole company, consisting of two hundred and seventy-six persons, came safe to land.

The inhabitants, though called Barbarians, received and accommodated them with great humanity, and manifested a tenderness too rarely found, upon such occasions, amongst those who bear the name of Christians: they brought them under cover, and kindled fires to warm and dry them. The apostle, who cheerfully suited himself to all circumstances, assisted in supplying the fire with fuel; but having gathered a parcel of sticks, a viper, which was unperceived in the midst of them, fastened itself upon his hand. He had just escaped from storm and shipwreck, and was exposed to as great a danger of another kind. Such is the nature of our present state; and it is a proof of our pride and ignorance, that we are seldom greatly apprehensive for ourselves, but when some formidable appearance is before our eyes. A tempest, pestilence, or earthquake,

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"where two seas met;" but there is nothing answerable to the word *met*: probably, it means what the mariners call a spit, or point of sand, running off from the shore, and which had a sufficient depth of water on either side.

alarms us, and not without reason; but, alas! we are not such mighty creatures, as to have nothing to fear but from such powerful agents. A tile, a fly, a hair, or a grain of sand, are sufficient instruments, in the hand of God, to remove a king from the throne to the grave, or to cut off the conqueror at the head of his victorious army. On the other hand, those who serve the Lord, and trust in him, are equally safe under all events: neither storms, nor flood, nor flames, nor the many unthought-of evils which lurk around in the smoothest scenes of life, have permission to hurt them till their race is finished; and then it little signifies by what means they are removed into their Master's joy. The apostle, in the strength of divine faith, shook off the venomous creature into the fire, and remained unmoved and unhurt. The islanders, who saw what had past, judged at first (from those faint apprehensions of a superior power inflicting punishment on the wicked, which seem to remain in the darkest and most ignorant nations) that he was certainly a murderer, who, though he had escaped the seas, was pursued by vengeance, and marked out for destruction; but when, after expecting for some time to see him drop down dead, they found that he had received no harm, they retracted their censure, and conceived him to be a god, or something more than man. This event probably prepared them to hear him with attention.

The apostle and his friends were courteously entertained three days by Publius, the chief person of the island, who resided near the place of their landing. He requited the kindness of his host by restoring to health his father, who had been some time ill of a fever and dysentery. In the same manner he laid his hands on many sick persons,

who were healed in answer to his prayers. These acceptable services procured him much favour from the inhabitants; and when, after three months' stay, he was about to depart, they furnished him liberally with necessary provisions for his voyage.

A. D. 61.] They sailed from thence in a ship of Alexandria that had wintered in the island, and stopping three days at Syracuse in Sicily, soon after arrived at Rhegium, and from thence, in two days, at Puteoli, near Naples, where they disembarked, and continued a week, at the request of the Christians of the place. From Puteoli to Rome their journey lay about one hundred miles by land.

The disciples at Rome having heard of Paul's approach, several of them met him at a place called Appii Forum, and another party at the Three Taverns; the former place being about fifty, and the other thirty miles from the city. At the sight of these believers, whom he had loved unseen, we are told he thanked God and took courage. Even the apostle Paul, though habitually flaming with zeal and love, was not always in the same frame. We learn from his own account of himself, that he had sometimes sharp exercises of mind; and perhaps this was such a time, when his thoughts were much engaged on what awaited him upon his arrival at Rome, and his appearance before the cruel and capricious Nero. The Lord has so constituted his body, the church, that the different members are needful and helpful to each other, and the stronger are often indebted to the weaker. St. Paul himself was revived and animated at this juncture by the sight of those who were, in every respect, inferior to him. It rejoiced him to see that Christ his Lord was worshipped at

Rome also; and, being in the presence of those with whom he could open his mind, and freely confer upon the glorious truths that filled his heart, he forgot at once the fatigue he had lately suffered, and the future difficulties he had reason to expect.

Upon their arrival at Rome, the centurion delivered up the prisoners to the proper officer; but Paul had the favour allowed him to live in a house which he hired, under the guard of one soldier. Here he immediately discovered his usual activity of spirit in his Master's cause; and, without losing time, sent on the third day for the principal persons of the Jews (according to his general custom of making the first declarations of the Gospel to them), and acquainted them with the cause of his prosecution and appeal. He assured them that he had no intention, in vindicating himself, to lay any thing to the charge of his own people; adding, that, not for any singularities of his own, or for any offence against the law of Moses, but for the hope of Israel, he was bound with * the chain he then wore. They answered, that they had received no information concerning him from Judea, but that they understood the sect to which he professed an attachment was every where spoken against; they therefore desired to hear his sentiments, and appointed a day for the purpose, when many of them came to him, and he spent the whole day, from morning till evening, in proving, confirming, and explaining the nature and necessity of the Gospel and kingdom of Christ, from the books of Moses and the prophets. His discourse had good

* Among the Romans, the prisoner was always chained to the soldier or soldiers who guarded him. St. Paul speaks of his chain, both to friends and enemies, with an indifference that shows how well content he was to wear it for his Master's sake. See Ephes. vi. 20.; 2 Tim. i. 16.

effect upon some, but others believed not, and they departed with considerable disagreement among themselves; the apostle taking leave of them with that solemn warning, which our Lord had often used in the course of his ministry, from the prophecy of Isaiah,* denouncing incurable and judicial blindness and hardness of heart upon those who wilfully rejected the proposal of the truth.

He remained a prisoner in his own hired house for the space of two years, having an unrestrained liberty to receive all who came to him, and to preach the glad tidings of salvation by Christ; which, we learn from his epistles,† he did with so much success, that his imprisonment evidently contributed to the furtherance of the Gospel, enlarged the number of believers, and animated the zeal and confidence of those who had already received faith and grace.

A. D. 63.] The history of St. Luke ends here, which I have followed more closely than I at first designed; partly because the facts he has recorded suggest many reflections which have, more or less, a reference to our main design, and partly from a reluctance to leave the only sure and incontestable history by which our researches into the establishment and state of the primitive church can be guided. For though some monuments of the early ages of Christianity, which are still extant, have a great share of merit, and will afford us materials to make good our plan, yet they must be selected with caution; for it would be a want of ingenuousness not to acknowledge, that there are great mixtures and blemishes to be found in the writings of those who lived nearest to the apostles' times. And in the most

* Isa. vi. 9, 10. † Philip. i. 12.

ancient historical remains several things have a place, which show that a spirit of credulity and superstition had very early and extensive influence; the evident traces of which have given too fair an occasion to some persons, of more learning than candour, to attempt to bring the whole of those records into disrepute. But where the characteristic genius and native tendency of the Gospel are rightly understood and carefully attended to, a mind, not under the power of bias and prejudice, will be furnished with sufficient *data*, whereby to distinguish what is genuine and worthy of credit, from the spurious and uncertain additions which have been incautiously received.

I shall be brief in deducing our history from this period to the close of the first century. St. Paul, after more than two years' confinement at Rome, having not yet finished his appointed measure of service, was providentially preserved from the designs of all his enemies, and set at liberty. We are told by some, that, in pursuance of the design he had long before expressed, he went into Spain, and from thence to Gaul, now called France: nor have endeavours been wanting to prove that he preached the Gospel even in the British isles. That he, at some time, accomplished his desire of visiting Spain, is not improbable; but we have no certain evidence that he did so. Much less is there any ground for supposing that he was either in France or Britain. From his own writings, however, we have good reason to believe, that upon his dismission from Rome, he revisited the churches of Syria, and some other parts of Asia; for, in his epistle to the Hebrews, he mentions his purpose of seeing them, in company with his beloved Timothy; and, writing to Philemon, who lived at Colosse, he requests him to

prepare him a lodging, for that he hoped to be with him shortly. And it was probably in this progress that he preached in Crete, and committed the churches he gathered there to the care of Titus; for we have no account in the Acts of his having visited that island before, except the little time he touched there in his passage to Rome, which seems not to have been sufficient for so great a work. How he was employed afterwards we know not; but it is generally agreed, that, towards the latter part of Nero's reign, he returned to Rome, and there received the crown of martyrdom.

In the accounts preserved of the rest of the apostles, we likewise meet with great uncertainty; nor can any thing be determined to satisfaction, concerning either the seat of their labours, or the time or manner of their deaths. I shall therefore wave a particular detail of what is not supported by sufficient proof. I only observe concerning St. Peter, that the assertion of his having been bishop of Rome, on which (and not on the true rock) the whole system of the papacy is built, is not only inconsistent with what is recorded of him in the Acts, and the silence of St. Paul concerning him, in the epistles he wrote from thence—but is so far without foundation in ecclesiastical history, that it still remains a point of dubious controversy, whether he ever saw Rome in his life. If he did, it was probably towards the close of it; and the most received opinion is, that he suffered martyrdom there at the same time with St. Paul; that Peter was crucified, and that Paul had the favour of being beheaded, in consideration that he was a Roman citizen.

The Christians, though generally despised, and often insulted, for their profession, had not hitherto been subject to a direct and capital persecution;

but Nero, who, intoxicated with power, had in a few years arrived at a pitch of wickedness and cruelty till then unheard of, at length directed his rage against the servants of Christ.

A. D. 64.] In his tenth year the city of Rome was set on fire, and a very considerable part of it consumed. This calamity was generally imputed to him as the author, and it seems not withont justice. Mischief and the misery of others were the study of his life; and he is reported to have expressed great pleasure at the spectacle, and to have sung the burning of Troy while Rome was in flames. Though he afterwards did many popular things, and spared no expence in relieving the people, and rebuilding the city, he could not clear himself from the suspicion of the fact, any otherwise than by charging it upon the Christians. The Heathen historian Tacitus, in his account of this event, enables us so well to judge of the character which the Christians bore in his time, that I shall subjoin a translation of it for the information of the unlearned.

"But neither the emperor's donations, nor the "atonements offered to the gods, could remove the "scandal of this report, but it was still believed "that the city had been burnt by his instigation. "Nero therefore, to put a stop to the rumour, "charged the fact, and inflicted the severest "punishments for it, upon the Christians, as they "were commonly called, a people detestable for "their crimes. The author of this sect was Christ, "who, in the reign of Tiberius, was put to death "by Pontius Pilate. The destructive superstition "which was by this means suppressed for the "present, soon broke out again, and not only over-"spread Judea, where it first arose, but reached "even to Rome, where all abominations, from

"every quarter, are sure to meet and to find ac-
"ceptance. Some who confessed themselves
"Christians were first apprehended, and a vast
"multitude afterwards upon their impeachment,
"who were condemned, not so much for burning
"the city, as for being the object of universal
"hatred. Their sufferings and torments were
"heightened by mockery and derision. Some
"were enclosed in the skins of wild beasts, that
"they might be torn in pieces by dogs; others
"were crucified; and others, being covered with
"inflammable matter, were lighted up as torches
"at the close of day. These spectacles were
"exhibited in Nero's gardens, where he held a
"kind of Circensian show, either mixing with the
"populace in the habit of a charioteer, or himself
"contending in the race. Hence it came to pass
"that, criminal and undeserving of mercy as they
"were, yet they were pitied, as being destroyed
"merely to gratify his savage and cruel disposition,
"and not with any view to the public good."

From this quotation it appears, that the Christians were considered by the Heathens as a sect that had been almost crushed by the death of their Master, but suddenly recovered strength, and spread far and near soon afterwards: that they were so extremely odious, on account of the supposed absurdity and wickedness of their principles, as to be thought capable of committing the worst crimes, when no sufficient proof could be found of their having committed any: that they were treated as the professed enemies of mankind, and therefore, upon the first occasion that offered, were promiscuously destroyed with the most unrelenting cruelty: that they did not suffer as common malefactors, who, when under the actual punishment of their crimes, are usually beheld with some

commiseration, but that insult and derision were added to the most exquisite inventions of torture: and lastly, that if these violent proceedings were blamed by any, it proceeded rather from the hatred they bore to Nero, than from a suspicion that the Christians met with any thing more than their just desert. These things are carefully to be observed, if we would form a right judgement of the primitive church. It is possible many persons suppose, that St. Paul's Epistles to the Romans, Corinthians, and Ephesians, were (like the pastoral letters of bishops in our own times) addressed to the bulk of the inhabitants in those places; but the case was far otherwise. The Romans to whom St. Paul wrote, were inconsiderable for their number; most of them contemptible in the sight of the world on account of their poverty and low rank in life, and (as the above extract from Tacitus proves) the objects of public detestation, for their attachment to the name and doctrines of Jesus.

Whether this persecution was confined to Rome, or carried on by public authority through all the provinces where Christians were to be found, is not absolutely certain, though the latter seems most probable; for it is hardly to be supposed that Nero would rage against them in the capital, and suffer them to live in peace every where else. Tertullian expressly asserts, that Nero enjoined their destruction, by public edicts, in the several provinces; and his testimony seems worthy of credit, as he mentions it in his apology, which, though written more than a century afterwards, was not at so great a distance of time but he might easily have been contradicted, if he had advanced an untruth. Besides, the example of Nero, without his express injunctions, seems to have been sufficient to awaken persecution against a people so

generally hated as the Christians were. Multitudes, upon this occasion, had the honour to seal their profession with their blood; but the cause for which they suffered triumphed over all opposition, and the martyrs' places in the church were supplied by an accession of fresh converts.

This storm, though sharp, was not of very long continuance: it terminated with the life of Nero, who was compelled, though with extreme reluctance, to destroy himself with his own hands, that he might escape the most ignominious punishment; he having been, by a decree of the senate, justly and solemnly branded with the character which malice and ignorance would have fixed upon the Christian name, and condemned to be whipped to death, as an enemy of the human race.

A. D. 68, 69.] After him, Galba, Otho, and Vitellius, were successively acknowledged emperors; but their reigns were short, and their deaths violent. The Jewish war, which ended in the final catastrophe and dispersion of that nation, was, at this time, carried on under the command of Vespasian, who, while engaged in that service, was saluted emperor by his army.

A. D. 70.] Upon this, leaving the conduct of the war to his son Titus, he returned to Italy; and, soon after the death of Vitellius, was peaceably established in the government. Titus having a secret commission from God (whom he knew not) to execute his fierce displeasure against the Jews, upon whom wrath was now come to the uttermost, after destroying the whole country of Judea with fire and sword, laid siege to Jerusalem; and, having taken it, at the end of five months, with an incredible slaughter of the Jews and the destruction of the temple, he burnt the city, and pulled down the very walls. More than a million of people, who had trusted in lying words, and

boasted themselves of an empty profession, perished in this war; and those who survived, were reduced to slavery, sold, and dispersed into all parts, at the will of conquerors. Thus ended the Jewish economy; and the law of Moses having received the accomplishment of all its types, ceremonies, and precepts, in the person, life, and death of Jesus the Messiah, was irrevocably abrogated as to its observance, which was rendered utterly impracticable by the destruction of the temple and the cessation of the priesthood.

A. D. 79.] Under Vespasian, and Titus who succeeded him, the Christian church enjoyed considerable peace and liberty, though, upon many occasions, they suffered from the ill-will of their adversaries. Few, however, were put to death publicly and professedly for their religion, till Domitian, who came to the empire after his brother Titus [A. D. 81], and who too much resembled Nero in his temper and conduct, imitated him likewise in employing his power against the followers of Christ [A. D. 94]. Several are mentioned in history who suffered in his time; but as little of moment, or that can be fully depended on, is recorded concerning them, I wave a recital of bare names. It is generally believed that St. John was banished to the isle of Patmos by this emperor, where he wrote his epistles to the churches of Asia, and the revelation of future events, which he had received from the Lord. Some there are who place these events much earlier, under the reign of Claudius, but the former opinion seems most probable, and best supported by the testimony of the ancients; but the story of his having been cast into a caldron of boiling oil, in the presence, as some add, of the Roman senate, does not seem supported by any tolerable evidence. It is be-

lieved that he gained his liberty from banishment, and returned to Ephesus, or the neighbouring parts; that he afterwards wrote his Gospel a little before his death, which is supposed to have happened about the last year of the century. If so, he was probably about a hundred years of age, and survived the rest of the apostles a considerable space.

Domitian, having made the earth groan under his cruelties and excesses, was assassinated in the sixteenth year of his reign [A. D. 96]. Nerva succeeded (a man of much fairer character), who repealed the sanguinary edicts of his predecessor; and it does not appear that the Christians were generally persecuted during his short government. Before his death (for he did not live two years) he adopted Trajan for his successor, who came to the empire [A. D. 98] with a general approbation, and is still reputed one of the best and wisest princes that Rome was favoured with. From his conduct, and that of some of the following emperors, it appeared, that the Gospel of Christ was not only hated by such persons as Nero and Domitian, who seemed professed enemies to every thing that was good and praiseworthy, but that men who desired to be thought the patrons of virtue, and to act upon the most benevolent principles, had objections equally strong against it; for if Trajan did not issue edicts expressly against the Christians, there was a very sharp persecution carried on against them in his reign; and when Pliny (in an epistle, still extant) represented to him the greatness of their sufferings, and the multitude and innocence of the sufferers, the emperor interposed no farther by his answer, than to forbid informations against them, upon suspicion, to be encouraged; but directed, that such as were

proved to be Christians, and refused to join in the Heathen sacrifices, should suffer death: and when he visited Asia, Ignatius, who was bishop of Antioch, being brought before him, he condemned him, with his own mouth, to be sent to Rome to be devoured by wild beasts. But we shall resume the account of what happened under his reign hereafter, his second or third year [A. D. 100] coinciding, according to the generally-received computation, with the end of the first century, which I have fixed as the limit of our researches in the present volume.

But, before I conclude the chapter, it may be useful to inquire what might be the motives which influenced the Heathens so eagerly to embrace every occasion of showing their displeasure against the professors of Christianity.

The original and proper cause of the injurious treatment the first Christians met with from the Heathens, and particularly from the Roman government, which usually tolerated every kind of religious worship that did not interfere with the public tranquillity and the obedience due to the state, was one that is of an abiding and universal influence, namely, that enmity of the carnal heart which cannot be brought to submit to the wisdom and will of God. This has been the secret source of all the persecution which has been the lot of the true disciples of Christ in every age. The sublime doctrines of the Gospel were offensive to the pretended wisdom of men, and the spirituality of its precepts no less thwarted their passions. Men, if only left to themselves, cannot but oppose a system which, at the same time that it reduces all their boasted distinctions of character to a perfect level in point of acceptance with God, enjoins a life and conversation absolutely incon-

sistent with the customs and pursuits which universally prevail, and brands many of the most allowed and authorized practices with the hard names of wickedness and folly. But they are not left to themselves; but are in, a degree they are little aware of, under the influence of Satan, who for the power he maintains and exerts over them, is styled in Scripture, "the god of this world." Since their own evil dispositions are thus instigated by the great enemy of God and goodness, it is entirely owing to the powerful restraints of the providence of the Most High, that his servants can, at any time, or in any place, enjoy an interval of rest; and though he has always made good his promise in favour of his church, that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it: though they who oppose it successively perish and leave their schemes unfinished, while the interest against which they rage triumphs over all their attacks, and subsists, revives, and flourishes amidst the changes which sweep away almost the remembrance of the most prosperous human establishments; yet he is pleased, for wise reasons, to permit them to try what they can do. Hereby the faith and patience of his people are strengthened and displayed, his care over them illustrated, and those who are sincerely devoted to him are evidently distinguished from hypocrites and pretenders, who join in an outward attachment to his Gospel in times of prosperity, but are presently wearied and disgusted when storms and troubles arise.

Amongst the more particular reasons why Christianity was obnoxious to the Heathens, not only to persons of vile character, as Nero, but to such as Trajan and Marcus Aurelius, who are, even to this day, highly extolled for their probity

and discernment, we may mention these that follow: and more than one of them may be easily accommodated to similar events which stand upon the records of history, down to our times, and their effects will probably be felt by many who are yet unborn.

1. The doctrine of the cross perhaps was, and always will be, the capital offence. The Christians professed to place all their hopes on the actions and sufferings of one who died, to all appearance, like a common malefactor. This, considered in one view, was thought such a kind and degree of infatuation, as provoked the most sovereign and universal contempt; and, in another view, it raised a grave concern for the interests of morality and virtue in those whose pride was flattered by their own empty declamations on those sounding topics. Every thing that was evil, they thought, might be expected from men who openly declared that they hoped for eternal happiness, not for their own works, which in this connexion they depreciated and renounced, but on account of the righteousness and mediation of another. If it was possible that Christians could maintain that course of conduct which the Gospel requires, and, at the same time, conceal the principles and motives on which they act, they might, perhaps, come off more easily with the world; for the justice, temperance, goodness, and truth which become their high calling, are suited to conciliate peace with all men. But their principles must not, cannot, be concealed. Those who know and love Jesus, and are sensible of their immense obligations to him, will glory in him, and in him only; they will avow, that it is not by their own power or holiness that they escape the pollutions of the world, but that they derive all their strength from faith in his blood, and from the supports of his grace. They dare not conceal this,

nor do they desire it, though they are sensible that the world, whether it bears the name of Heathen or Christian, will hate and despise them for it.

2. The Romans, though attached to their old system of idolatry, were not averse to the admission of new divinities, upon the ground of what a modern writer calls, a spirit of intercommunity; that is, every one had liberty to adopt what worship he pleased, provided due honour was given to the ancient establishments. The votaries of the Egyptian, Roman, and Syrian deities, while they paid some peculiar regard to their own favourites, indulged each other in a mutual acknowledgement of the rest; but the religion of Jesus was absolutely incompatible with them all, would admit of no competition, and his followers could not avoid declaring, upon all occasions, that "they were no gods "that were made with hands." On this account they were considered as a most uncharitable, proud, and narrow-hearted sect; as the Jews, for the same reason, had been before them. And thus it will always be. Nothing will more effectually secure a man in the peaceful possession of his own errors, than his pleadings for the indifference of error in general, and allowing those who most widely differ from him to be all right in their own way; and this lukewarm comprehension, which is a principal part of that pretended candour and charity for which our own times are so remarkable, preserves a sort of intercourse or confederacy amongst multitudes who are hardly agreed in any one thing but their joint opposition to the spirit and design of the Gospel. But they who love the truth cannot but declare against every deviation from it; they are obliged to decline the proposed intercommunity, and to vindicate the commands and institutions of God from the inventions and traditions

of men; they not only build for themselves upon the foundation which God has laid in Zion, but they are free to profess their belief, that "other foun-"dation can no man lay;" that "there is no other "name given under heaven by which a sinner can "be saved," and that none can have an interest in this name but by that faith which purifies the heart, works by love, and overcomes the world: therefore they always have been, and always will be, hated, as uncharitable and censorious; and are sure to be treated accordingly, so far as opportunity and circumstances will permit those who think themselves aggrieved to discover their resentment.

3. The wisest and most respectable characters among the Heathen rulers, either for reasons of state, or from their own superstition, were generally the most solicitous to preserve the old religion from innovations. The history of mankind furnishes us with frequent proofs, that persons, in other respects, of the greatest penetration and genius, have often been as blindly devoted to the absurdities of a false religion as the weakest among the vulgar; or if they had seen the folly of many things that have the sanction of antiquity and custom, yet the maxims of a false policy, and that supposed connexion and alliance between the established religion and the welfare of the state, which has been instilled into them from their infancy, induce them to think it their interest, if not their duty, to keep up the same exterior, and to leave things as they found them. Trajan seems to have been influenced by these considerations. He was zealous for the Heathen system, in which he had been educated, and regarded it (as the Romans were accustomed to do) as the basis, or, at least, the chief security, of the government. The Christians therefore were to be punished, not

only for their obstinacy in maintaining their own opinions, but as being eventually enemies to the state; for though their conduct was peaceable, and they paid a cheerful obedience to laws and governors, while they did not interfere with that obedience they owed to Christ their supreme Lord, yet their doctrines, which struck at the very root of idolatry, made them accounted dangerous to society, and deserving to be exterminated from it.

4. These suspicions were strengthened by the great success and spread the Gospel obtained in this first century. Within the compass of a few years it had extended to almost every part of the Roman empire. In this view it appeared formidable, and called for a speedy and vigorous suppression, before it should become quite insuperable by the accession of fresh strength and numbers. But the event did not answer their expectation. Believers grew and multiplied, in defiance of all the cruelties exercised upon them: the numbers and constancy of the sufferers, and the gentle spirit of meekness, forgiveness, and love which they discovered, often made lasting impressions upon the people, sometimes upon their tormentors and judges; and, by the blessing of God upon their doctrine, thus powerfully recommended by their conduct, and sealed by their blood, new converts were continually added to the church.

5. When it was thus determined to extirpate, if possible, these odious and dangerous people, pretexts and occasions were always ready; slanderous reports concerning their tenets and assemblies were industriously promoted and willingly believed. Some of these took their rise from misapprehension; some were probably invented by those who apostatized from the church, who, to justify themselves, as well as to evince their sincerity, pre-

tended to make discoveries of horrid evils that prevailed amongst them, under the disguise of religion. Many, who would not have invented such stories themselves, were however, well pleased to circulate what they had heard, and took it for granted that every thing was true which confirmed the opinion they had before entertained of this pestilential and despicable sect. But neither violence nor calumny could prevail against the cause and people of God and his Christ: they were supported by an almighty arm; and though many had the honour to lay down their lives in this glorious cause, many more were preserved by his providence in the most dangerous circumstances.

The Gospel of Christ, though contradictory to the received opinions, laws, customs, and pursuits of every place where it appeared, though unsupported either by arts or arms, though opposed by power and policy on every side, in a space of about sixty-six years from our Lord's ascension (according to the promise he gave his disciples), had spread successively from Jerusalem, through Judea and Samaria, even to the ends of the earth. Christians were to be found in every province where the Roman power ruled, and in most of their principal cities; and though not many noble, mighty, or wise were called, yet some there were, and the power of the grace of Jesus was displayed in every rank of life. Courtiers, senators, and commanders, notwithstanding the difficulty of their situation, were not ashamed of his cross; and some of the learned obtained that peace and happiness, by embracing his Gospel, which they had sought to no purpose in the vain intricacies of a false philosophy. Nor was the success of the Gospel confined within the limits of the Roman empire, but extended eastward to Parthia and Babylon, where the Roman eagles

were not acknowledged. We are not sure, however, that there were many collected societies of Christians in every province, or that those societies were in general very numerous. Those parts of Asia and Greece which had been the scene of St. Paul's labours, seem to have had the greatest number of settled churches in proportion to their extent; and their largest assemblies were probably in their principal cities, such as Antioch, Alexandria, and Rome. But we have reason to believe, from our Lord's own declarations, that real Christians, in the most flourishing times * of the church, have been very few, in comparison with the many who chose the broad and beaten road which leads to destruction: but these few are under his conduct and blessing, as the salt of the earth, and are therefore scattered far and wide, according to the disposal of his wise providence, who appoints the time of their birth and the bounds of their habitation.

If, by the epithet *primitive*, we mean that period during which the professed churches of Christ preserved their faith and practice remarkably pure, and uninfluenced by the spirit and maxims of the world, we cannot extend it far beyond the first century. We are sure that a mournful declension prevailed very early, and quickly spread, like a contagion, far and wide; and, indeed, the seeds of those evils, which afterwards produced such a plentiful harvest of scandals and mischiefs, were already sown, and began to spring up, while the apostles were yet living. And we shall show hereafter, that the first and purest age of the church was not free from such blemishes as have been observable in all succeeding revivals of true religion. These things are to be guarded against with the utmost attention; but they will more or less appear while human nature con-

* Matt. vii. 13, 14.

tinues in its present state of infirmity. While the professors of Christianity were few in comparison of their opponents, while they were chiefly poor and obscure persons, and had sharp persecutions to grapple with, so long they preserved the integrity and purity of their profession in general, and the disorders which appeared among them were faithfully and successfully opposed and corrected; afflictions and sufferings kept them firmly united in a love to the truth and to each other: but when they were favoured with intervals of peace, and the increase of numbers and riches seemed to give them a more fixed establishment in the world, they were soon corrupted, and that beautiful simplicity, which is the characteristic of genuine Christianity, was obscured by will-worship and vain reasonings. Amongst the multitudes who abandoned idolatry, and embraced the Christian faith, there were several who had borne the specious name of philosophers. Some of these, on the one hand, laboured to retain as many of their favourite sentiments as they could, by any means, reconcile to the views they had formed of the Gospel; and, on the other hand, they endeavoured, if possible, to accommodate the Christian scheme to the taste and prejudices of the times, in hopes thereby to make it more generally acceptable. Thus the doctrines of the Scripture were adulterated by those within the church, and misrepresented to those without. Perhaps the first alterations of this kind were not attempted with a bad intention, or extended to the most important points: but the precedent was dangerous; for the progress of error, like that of sin, is from small beginnings to awful and unthought-of consequences. Gospel truth, like a bank opposed to a torrent, must be preserved entire, to be useful: if

a breach is once made, though it may seem at first to be small, none but He who says to the sea, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no farther," can set bounds to the threatening inundation that will quickly follow. In effect, a very considerable deviation from the plan of the apostles had taken place in the churches, before the decease of some who had personally conversed with them.

We have no ecclesiastical book of this age extant worthy of notice, except that called the First of the Two Epistles to the Corinthians, which are ascribed to Clement, bishop of Rome, who is supposed to be the Clement mentioned by St. Paul in his Epistle to the Romans. This epistle is not unsuitable to the character of the time when it was written, and contains many useful things; yet it is not (as we have it) free from fault, and, at the best, deserves no higher commendation than as a pious well-meant performance. It stands first both in point of time and merit, in the list of those writings which bear the name of the apostolical fathers; for the rest of them, if the genuine productions of the persons whose names they bear, were composed in the second century. For as to the epistle ascribed to Barnabas, St. Paul's companion, those who are strangers to the arguments by which many learned men have demonstrated it to be spurious, may be convinced only by reading it, if they are in any measure acquainted with the true spirit of the apostles' writings. We are, indeed, assured, that both the epistles of Clement, this which bears the name of Barnabas, several said to have been written by Ignatius (the authenticity of which has likewise been disputed), one by Polycarp, and the book called the Shepherd of Hermas, which is filled with visionary fables, were all in high esteem in the first ages of the church,

were read in their public assemblies, and considered as little inferior to the canonical writings; which may be pleaded as one proof of what I have advanced concerning that declension of spiritual taste and discernment which soon prevailed; for I think I may venture to say there are few, if any, of the Protestant churches but have furnished authors whose writings (I mean the writings of some one author) have far surpassed all the apostolical fathers taken together, and that not only in point of method and accuracy, but in scriptural knowledge, solid judgement, and a just application of evangelical doctrine to the purposes of edification and obedience,

But though the first Christians were men subject to passion and infirmities, like ourselves, and were far from deserving or desiring that undistinguishing admiration and implicit submission to all their sentiments, which were paid them by the ignorance and superstition of after-times; yet they were eminent for faith, love, self-denial, and a just contempt of the world; multitudes of them cheerfully witnessed to the truth with their blood, and, by their steadfastness and patience under trials, and their harmony among themselves, often extorted honourable testimonies even from their opposers. Could they have transmitted their spirit, together with their name, to succeeding generations, the face of ecclesiastical history would have been very different from what it now bears; but, by degrees, the love of novelty and the thirst of power, a relaxed attention to the precepts of Christ, and an undue regard to the names, authority, and pretensions of men, introduced those confusions, contentions, and enormities, which at length issued in an almost universal apostasy from that faith and course of practice which alone are wor-

thy the name of Christianity. The prosecution of this subject, more especially with a view to the history of the favoured few who were preserved from the general contagion, and of the treatment they met with who had the courage to censure or withstand the abuses of the times they lived in, will be attempted in the following volumes of this work, if God, in whose hands our times are, is pleased to afford opportunity; and if the specimen presented to the public, in this volume, should so far meet the approbation of competent judges, as to encourage the author to proceed.

Some particulars which may conduce to render the state of the church in the first century more evident to the reader, as well as to give light into the true state of religion amongst ourselves, and which could not be well introduced in the course of our narration without making too frequent and too long digressions, I have, for that reason, treated of separately in the chapters that follow.

CHAPTER II.

An Essay on the Character of St. Paul, considered as an Exemplar or Pattern of a Minister of Jesus Christ.

The success with which the first promulgation of the Gospel was attended, is to be ultimately ascribed to the blessing and operation of the Holy Spirit; and the great means which the Spirit of God is pleased to accompany with an efficacious power upon the souls of men, is the subject-matter of the Gospel itself. He concurs with no other doctrine but that of the Scripture. The most laboured endeavours to produce a moral change of heart and conduct will always prove ineffectual, unless accommodated to the principles

of revelation, respecting the ruin of the human nature by sin, and the only possible method of its recovery by Jesus Christ.

And as the Holy Spirit bears witness to no other doctrine, so he ordinarily restrains his blessing to those ministers who have themselves experienced the power of the truths which they deliver to others. A man may be systematically right, and strenuous in the delivery and defence of orthodox notions; yet if he is not in some degree possessed of the dispositions and motives which become a minister of the New Testament, he will seldom be honoured with much success or acceptance. The want of that disinterested and dependent frame of mind which the Gospel inculcates on all who profess it, will render his labours insignificant; for the Holy Spirit, on whose influence success entirely depends, will seldom co-operate with any but those who are sincerely governed by his precepts.

A great stress therefore is laid in the New Testament upon the principles, tempers, and conduct which ought to distinguish the men who have the honour to be intrusted with the important charge of preaching the Gospel of Christ. To delineate their proper character, and to form their manners suitable to their high calling, is the principal scope of the epistles to Timothy and Titus. And when we consider what we read there, in connexion with many passages to the same purpose, which occur occasionally in the inspired writings, we may well adopt the apostle's words, "Who is sufficient for these things?" A Christian, even in private life, is exposed to innumerable snares and dangers, from his situation in an evil world, the power and subtilty of his spiritual enemies, and the influence of the body of sin in himself, which, though weakened and despoiled

of dominion, is not yet destroyed. A minister of the Gospel, besides these trials, in common with other Christians, has many peculiar to himself. His services are more difficult, his temptations more various, his conduct more noticed; many eyes are upon him—some enviously watching for his halting, and some perhaps too readily proposing him as a pattern, and content to adopt whatever has the sanction of his example. If encouraged and acceptable, he is in danger of being greatly hurt by popularity and the favour of friends; if opposed and ill treated (and this he must expect in some instances if he is faithful), he is liable either to be surprised into anger and impatience, or to sink into dejection and fear. It is therefore a great encouragement to find from Scripture (and not from Scripture only), how the grace of God has enabled others, in equal circumstances of danger and temptation, to rise superior to all impediments, and to maintain such a course of conduct, that they stand proposed as proper patterns for our imitation, and call upon us to be followers of them, as they were of Christ.

Amongst these the character of St. Paul shines with a superior lustre; he stands distinguished by the eminence of his knowledge, grace, labours, and success, as a noble and animating exemplar of a minister of Jesus Christ. And if it should be thought a digression from the design of an ecclesiastical history, to allot a few pages to the consideration of his principles, and the uniform tenour of his life, yet I hope the digression will not be unprofitable in itself, nor judged unsuitable to my general plan: for I proposed not to confine myself to a dry detail of facts, but to point out the genuine tendency of the Gospel where it is truly received, and the spirit by which it is opposed,

and to show the impossibility of reviving practical godliness by any other means than those which were so signally successful in the first age of the church.

Was I to exhibit any recent character with these views, the exceptions of partiality and prejudice would not be so easily obviated. The merits of such a character, however commendable upon the whole, would be objected to, and the incidental infirmities and indiscretions of the person (for the best are not wholly free from blemish), would be studiously collected and exaggerated, as a sufficient contrast to all that could be said in his praise. But modesty forbids the same open disingenuous treatment of one who was an apostle of Christ. Besides, he lived and died long ago; and as some learned men have found, or pretended to find, a way to reconcile his writings with the prevailing taste of the times, he is commended in general terms, and claimed as a patron, by all parties of the religious world. Therefore I am warranted to take it for granted, that none who profess the name of Christians will be angry with me for attempting to place his spirit and conduct in as full a light as I can, or for proposing him as a proper criterion, whereby to judge of the merits and pretensions of all who account themselves ministers of Christ.

Many things worthy our notice and imitation have occurred concerning this apostle whilst we were tracing that part of his history which St. Luke has given us in the Acts; but I would now attempt a more exact delineation of his character, as it is farther exemplified in his own epistles, or may be illustrated from a review of what has been occasionally mentioned before.

We may observe much of the wisdom of God in disposing the circumstances in which his people

are placed previous to their conversion. They only begin to know Him when he is pleased to reveal himself to them by his grace, but he knew them long before. He determines the hour of their birth, their situation in life, and their earliest connexions; he watches over their childhood and youth, and preserves them from innumerable evils and dangers into which their follies, while in a state of ignorance and sin, might plunge them; and he permits their inclinations to take such a course, that, when he is pleased to call them to the knowledge of his truth, many consequences of their past conduct, and the reflections they make upon them, may concur, upon the whole, in a subserviency to fit them for the services into which he designs to lead them afterwards. Thus he leads the blind by a way that they knew not; and often, for the manifestation of his wisdom, power, and grace, in bringing good out of evil, he, for a season, gives them up so far to the effects of their own depravity, that, in the judgement of men, none seem more unlikely to be the subjects of his grace, than some of those whom he has purposed not only to save from ruin, but to make instrumental to the salvation of others. I doubt not but some of my readers, who are acquainted with their own hearts, will easily apply this observation to themselves; but there are instances in which the contrast is so striking and strong, that it will be made for them by those who know them. It is, however, peculiarly exemplified in the case of St. Paul. He was set apart from the womb (as he himself tells us),* to be a chosen instrument of preaching among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ. The frame of his heart and the manner of his life, the

* Gal. i. 15.

profession he had made, and the services in which he was engaged before his conversion, were evidently suited to render him an unsuspected as well as a zealous witness to the truth and power of the Gospel, after he had embraced it. The Lord's purpose was to show the insufficiency of all legal appointments and human attainments, the power of his grace in subduing the strongest prejudices, and the riches of his mercy in pardoning the most violent attempts against his Gospel. We know not how this purpose could have been more effectually answered, in a single instance, than by making choice of our apostle; who had been possessed of every advantage that can be imagined, exclusive of the Gospel, and, in consequence of these advantages, had made the most pertinacious efforts to suppress it. He was born a Jew, bred up under Gamaliel, a chief of the Pharisees,* the sect which professed the most peculiar attachment to the law of Moses. His conduct, before he became a Christian, was undoubtedly moral, if we understand morality in that lean and confined sense which it too frequently bears among ourselves, as signifying no more than an exemption from gross vices, together with a round of outward duties performed in a mercenary, servile spirit, to soothe conscience, and purchase the favour of God. While he was thus busied in observing the letter of the law, he tells us, he was alive—that is, he pleased himself in his own attainments, doubted not of his ability to please God, and that his state was safe and good. Upon these principles (which act uniformly upon all who are governed by them), his heart was filled with enmity against the doctrines and people of Jesus; and his blinded conscience

* Phil. iii.

taught him that it was his duty to oppose them. He was a willing witness at the death of Stephen:* and from a spectator, soon became a distinguished actor in the like tragedies. Such is the unavoidable gradation, in a state of nature, from bad to worse. The excess and effects of his rage are described by St. Luke in very lively colours, and he often acknowledges it in his epistles; for though the Lord forgave him, he knew not how to forgive himself for having persecuted and wasted the church of God;† he made havock of the disciples, like a lion or a wolf amongst a flock of sheep, pressing into their houses, sparing none, not even women. Thus he was filled with the hateful spirit of persecution, which is undistinguishing and unrelenting. The mischiefs he could do in Jerusalem not being sufficient to gratify his insatiable cruelty and thirst of blood, he obtained (as has been formerly observed) a commission from the high priest to harass the disciples at Damascus. In this journey, when he was near the city, he was suddenly struck to the ground by the voice and appearance of the Lord Jesus. From that hour a memorable change took place in his heart and views; and, having been baptized by Ananias, and received a free pardon of all his wickedness, with a commission to the apostolic office, he began to preach that faith which before he had so industriously laboured to destroy. In this new light we are now to consider him; and whatever might be reasonably expected from a sense of such a display of grace and mercy, in his behalf, we shall find manifested in the subsequent course of his life. Happy are those who come the nearest to such an exemplary pattern!

* Acts, xxii. 20. † Gal. i. 13; 1 Cor. xv. 9.

I. The characteristic excellence of St. Paul, which was as the spring or source of every other grace, was the ardency of the supreme love he bore to his Lord and Saviour. It would not be easy to find many periods throughout his epistles which do not evidence the fulness of his heart in this respect. He seems delighted even with the sound of the name of Jesus, so that, regardless of the cold rules of studied composition, we find him repeating it ten times in the compass of ten successive verses.* He was so struck with the just claim the Saviour had to every heart, that he accounted a want of love to him the highest pitch of ingratitude and wickedness, and deserving the utmost severity of wrath and ruin.† When he was conscious that, for his unwearied application to the service of the Gospel, in defiance of the many dangers and deaths which awaited him in every place, he appeared to many as one beside himself, and transported beyond the bounds of sober reason; he thought it a sufficient apology to say, "The love of Christ constrains us;"‡ we are content to be fools for his sake, to be despised so he may be honoured, to be nothing in ourselves that he may be all in all. He had such a sense of the glorious, invaluable excellence of the person of Christ, of his adorable condescension in taking the nature and curse of sinners upon himself, and his complete suitableness and sufficiency, as the wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption of his people, that he often seems at a loss for words answerable to the emotions of his heart; and when he has exhausted the powers of language, and astonished his readers with his inimitable energy, he intimates a convic-

* 1 Cor. i. 1—10. † 1 Cor. xvi. 22. ‡ 2 Cor. v. 14.

tion of his inability to do justice to a subject, the height, and depth, and length, and breadth of which are too great for our feeble capacities to grasp. But, besides these general views, he was particularly affected with the exceeding abundant love and grace of Christ to himself, when he reflected on the circumstances in which the Lord had found him, and the great things he had done for him. That he who had before been a persecutor, a blasphemer, and injurious, should be forgiven, accepted as a child of God, intrusted with the ministry of the Gospel, and appointed to everlasting salvation, was indeed an instance of wonderful grace. So it appeared to himself, and at the thought of it he often seems to forget his present subject, and breaks forth into inimitable digressions to the praise of Him who had loved him, and given himself for him. Happily convinced of the tendency and efficacy of this principle in himself, he proposes it to others, instead of a thousand arguments, whenever he would inculcate the most unreserved obedience to the whole will of God, or stir up believers to a holy diligence in adorning the doctrine of their God and Saviour in all things; and his exhortations to the conscientious discharge of the various duties of relative life, are generally enforced by this grand motive. In a word, at all times, and in all places, the habitual and favourite subject that employed his thoughts, his tongue, and his pen, was the love of Christ.

Supported and animated by this love, he exerted himself to the utmost, in promoting the knowledge of him whom he loved, and bearing testimony to his power and grace. Nothing could dishearten, or weary, or terrify, or bribe him from his duty: and this must and will be universally, the leading principle of a faithful minister. Should

a man possess the tongue of men and angels, the finest genius, and the most admired accomplishments, if he is not constrained and directed by the love of Christ, he will either do nothing, or nothing to the purpose; he will be unable to support either the frowns or the smiles of the world; his studies and endeavours will certainly be influenced by low and selfish views. Interest or a desire of applause may stimulate him to shine as a scholar, a critic, or a philosopher; but till the love of Christ rules in his heart, he will neither have inclination nor power to exert himself for the glory of God, or the good of souls.

II. The inseparable effect, and one of the surest evidences of love to Christ, is a love to his people. Of this likewise our apostle exhibits an instructive and affecting example. The warmth and cordiality of his love to those who loved his Lord and Master, appear in every page of his writings. He so rejoiced in their prosperity, that to hear of it, at any time, made him in a manner forget his own sorrows, * when encompassed with troubles on every side; and though, in many instances, he did not meet that grateful return he had reason to expect, yet he could not be discouraged: but when he had occasion to expostulate with some upon this account, he adds, "I will still gladly "spend and be spent for you, though the more I

* 2 Cor. vii. 7. 13. See likewise Phil. ii. 28. which finely intimates his tenderness and affection. He was oppressed with sorrow upon sorrow, yet he felt more for the Philippians than for himself. He mourned over Epaphroditus, when sick, for their sakes, and sent him away for their comfort when recovered; and this he did as the most effectual means to lessen his own burden, by sympathising in that joy his friends would have in the interview, though he could not directly partake with them.

"love you the less I am loved." * Of such a generous temper as this, the world, would they observe it, must acknowledge (as the magicians in Egypt), "This is the finger of God;" for nothing but his grace can produce a conduct so contrary to the natural inclination of man, as to persevere and increase in kindness and affection to those who persevere in requiting it with coldness and ingratitude. His epistles to the Thessalonians abound in such expressions and strains of tenderness as would doubtless be generally admired (especially by those who can read them in the original), were they not overlooked, through the unhappy disregard which too many show to that best of books in which they are contained. When he is appealing to themselves concerning the sincerity of his conduct, and how far he had been from abusing his authority, he says, "We were gentle among "you, even as a nurse (or mother) cherisheth her "children,"—who, by her tender and assiduous offices, supplies their inability to take care of themselves. † (It would be well if all who have aimed to derive a plenitude of power from the example of the apostles, were equally desirous to imitate him in the use of it.) He then adds, "So being affectionately desirous of you, we were "willing to have imparted unto you, not the Gos"pel of God only, but also our own souls, because "ye were dear to us." No comment can do justice to the spirit of this sentiment, or to the force of the expression in the Greek. In another passage which is rendered in our version, "We being "taken from you," the original term ‡ has an emphasis which no single word in our language can

* 2 Cor. xii. 15. † 1 Thess. ii. 7, 8.
‡ Αποφανισθεντες, 1 Thess. ii. 17.

answer. It imports such a state of separation as is made between a parent and a child by the death of either, when the child is left a helpless and exposed orphan, or the parent is bereaved of the staff and comfort of his age. It beatifully intimates the endearing affection which subsisted between the apostle and the persons he was writing to, and demonstrates the greatest tenderness, simplicity, and condescension. But his regard went beyond words, and was evidenced by the whole course of his actions. Nor was it confined to those who had enjoyed the benefits of his personal ministry; his heart was charged with the care and welfare of all the churches; and those who had not seen his face in the flesh had an unceasing share in his solicitude and prayers:* nay, so strong was his love to the churches, that it balanced his habitual desire to be with Christ; he could not determine which was most eligible, to suffer with the members upon earth (so that he might be serviceable to them), or to reign with the Head in heaven.† In the passage referred to, we see the happy centripetal and centrifugal forces which carried him on through the circle of duty: he constantly tended and gravitated to his centre of rest; but successive opportunities of usefulness and service drew him off, and made him willing to wait yet longer.

In this part of his character we are not to consider him exclusively as an apostle. All who have truly known the Gospel to be the power of God unto salvation, are partakers of the same spirit, according to the measure of their faith. That person is unworthy the name of a Christian,

* Col. ii. 1. † Phil. i. 23, 24.

who does not feel a concern and affection for his brethren who are in the world. It must be allowed that prejudices and misapprehensions too often prevent the Lord's people from knowing each other; but, so far as they believe a person to be a child of God through faith, they cannot but love him. This is the immutable criterion which our Lord himself has given, whereby his real disciples are to be known and acknowledged.* He has not directed us to judge by their discourses, their knowledge, or even their zeal, but by the evidence they give of mutual love; and we may as easily conceive of a sun without light, or a cause without an effect, as of a person duly affected with a sense of the glory of God and the love of Christ, and not proportionably filled with a spirit of love to all who are like-minded. But especially this disposition is essential to a minister of the Gospel, and the apostle assures us, that all imaginable qualifications are of no avail without it; though we could possess the powers of a prophet or an angel, or the zeal of a martyr, if we are destitute of this love, we are, in the sight of God, but as sounding brass,† or a tinkling cymbal.

III. St. Paul's inflexible attachment to the great doctrines of the Gospel is another part of his character which deserves our attention. He knew their worth, experienced their power in his own soul, and saw that, though they were unacceptable

* John, xiii. 35.

† "Sounding brass," without meaning and without life. Such are the most specious gifts and performances, if unaccompanied by a spirit of love. They may perhaps be useful to others (as the sound of a bell gives notice and brings people together), but the possessor himself is a lifeless instrument; he designs no good, and will receive no reward.

to the wisdom of the world, they bore the impress of the manifold wisdom of God. He takes notice that, in those early days, there were many who "corrupted" the word of God.* The word properly signifies to adulterate, to imitate the practice of dishonest vintners, who mix and sophisticate their liquors, so that, though the colour is preserved, and the taste perhaps nearly counterfeited, the quality and properties are quite altered and depraved: but he says, "We are not as they." He preached the Gospel in its purity and simplicity, the sincere, genuine milk of the word,† neither weakened by water, nor disguised by any artful sweetening to render it more palatable. He added nothing of his own, nor employed any art or gloss to palliate the truth, that it might be more acceptable to men of carnal minds. As he was not ashamed of it, neither was he afraid lest it should fall without success to the ground, if not supported and assisted by inventions of his own. He knew whose word it was, and therefore cheerfully ventured the issue with him, who alone could procure it a welcome reception; and as he disdained the thought of deviating a tittle himself from the plain and full declaration of the truth, neither could he bear, no, not for anhour, with those who presumed to do so.‡ I doubt not but the warmth of his zeal, in this respect, has disgusted many in the present day, wherein a seeming candour and forbearance is pleaded for and extended to almost every sentiment, except the truths in which St. Paul gloried. There is little doubt but many, if they had the courage and honesty to speak out, would add St. Paul himself to the list of those whom they

* Καπηλευοντες. 2 Cor. ii. 17. † Αδολον γαλα. 1 Pet. ii. 2.
‡ Gal. ii. 5.

despise as uncharitable and hot-brained bigots; for who has offended more than he against the rules of that indifference to error which is at present miscalled charity? The Galatians, in a short time after he left them, had ventured to admit some alteration in the doctrine they had received from him: it was chiefly in one point. They had been persuaded into an undue regard for the law of Moses. This, some may think, was little more than a circumstantial; that it could not have any great or direct influence upon their moral practice, and that they might be very good men and good Christians, though, in this one thing, they could not see exactly with their teacher's eyes. But how different was the apostle's judgement! If the Galatians had returned to the practice of idolatry, or broke out into the most scandalous immoralities, he could hardly have expressed his surprise and grief in stronger terms. He changes his usual manner of address, and speaks to them as a senseless people* under the power of some unaccountable fascination. He tells them that, by admitting such an addition,† small and inconsiderable as they might think it, they had, in effect, received another Gospel; which was, however, so enervated and despoiled of efficacy, that it was, more properly speaking, become no Gospel at all, utterly unworthy the least pretence to the name. Farther, he denounces an anathema (the highest curse) upon any person who should dare to preach any such pretended Gospel, even though, if such a thing were possible, it should be himself, or an angel from heaven; and this denunciation he immediately repeats, lest it should be thought that he spoke rather from warmth of temper than from

* Gal. iii. 1. † Gal. i. 6—9.

a just sense of the importance of the case. What would some of my readers think of a man who should, at this time, express himself in terms like these? But let it be remembered that our apostle, who was so ready with an anathema upon this occasion, and who, in another place, passes the same severe judgement* upon any man who does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, was far from speaking thus from emotions of anger and ill-will. The disposition of his own mind, the tender concern with which he viewed the worst of sinners, may be judged of from his willingness to be made an anathema himself,† after the manner of Christ, if, by all he could suffer, he might be a means of saving the Jews, who were his worst enemies, and from whom he had constantly received the most unjust and cruel treatment. But when the cause of the Gospel and the honour of Christ were in question, he could not, he durst not, consult with the feelings of flesh and blood; but, as the minister and messenger of the Lord, he solemnly declared what must, and will, be the awful consequence of neglecting or corrupting the word of life.

Every faithful minister of the Gospel is possessed of a degree of the same attention to the purity of the truth and faith once delivered to the saints. They must not deviate from their instructions, nor can they behold with indifference the specious attempts of others to mislead the unwary. They know what censures they must expect upon this account: it is sufficient for them that they can appeal to the Searcher of hearts, that though, as the servants of Christ, they dare not aim to please men by speaking smooth things, yet they act from

* 1 Cor. xvi. 22. † Rom. ix. 3.

principles of benevolence and love, and would rejoice in the salvation of their greatest opposers. The world, perhaps, would judge more favourably of them if they knew all, if they were witnesses to the prayers and tears which they pour out for them in secret, and the emotions of mind they feel when they are constrained to declare the more awful parts of their message; but, as ministers, and in their public work, they cannot avoid pointing out the danger of those who venture their souls and eternal hopes upon any other doctrine than that which St. Paul preached.

IV. But though St. Paul was so tenacious of the great foundation-truths of the Gospel, and would not admit or connive at any doctrine that interfered with them, he exercised, upon all occasions, a great tenderness to weak consciences, in matters that were not essential to the faith, and when the scruples were owing rather to a want of clear light than to obstinacy. This was evident in his conduct with regard to the great controversy that soon took place between the Jewish and Gentile converts, about the distinction of meats and drinks, and other rituals enjoined by the law of Moses; the obligation * of which, many, who had been educated in the practice of those observances, did not immediately see were superseded by the Gospel of Christ. He knew and asserted his own liberty; yet, in condescension to the weakness of others, he often abridged himself of it, and declared that, rather than grieve or cause offence to a weak brother, he would eat no meat while the world stood. His practice herein will probably be of general application, *mutatis mutandis*, so long as the present state of human in-

* Rom. xiv

firmity subsists. A defect in knowledge, the prejudices of education and custom, the remains of a legal spirit, the influence of great names, and other causes of a like nature, will probably always operate, so far as to keep up lesser differences in judgement and practice amongst those who agree in the great and fundamental truths. The enemy gains too much advantage from these things not to improve such differences into divisions. Self is too prevalent in the best men, and the tendency of self is, to exact submission, to hurry to extremes, to exaggerate trifles into points of great consequence, and to render us averse to the healing expedients of peace. From these sources, discords and evils innumerable have been multiplied and perpetuated among the various denominations under which the Lord's people have been ranged, which have greatly hindered the welfare and progress of the common cause, and exposed each contending party to the scorn of their real enemies. But were the spirit and conduct of our apostle more adopted, many debates would entirely cease; and in those things where a difference of judgement would still subsist, the exercise of patience, gentleness, and mutual forbearance, would, perhaps, afford fairer occasion for the display of the Christian character, than if we were all exactly of a mind. Then the strong would bear the infirmities of the weak, the one would not censure nor the other despise; nor would those whose minds have been enlarged by a variety of experience and observation, think it at all strange, much less would they be angry, if others, who have not had the same advantages, cannot immediately enter into all their sentiments. St. Paul, in knowledge, abilities, and usefulness, was eminently superior to all those among whom he chiefly conversed; and, as an

apostle, he had a stronger right than any man since the apostles' day could have, to exact an implicit deference and submission; but he had drunk deeply of the spirit of his Master, and we are concerned to follow him, as he followed Christ, in the exercise of tenderness to the weakest of the flock.

It is not my present business to define what are properly essentials in the Christian religion, and to separate them clearly from the less important points, which, for that reason, and in contradistinction to the other, are called circumstantials. This would lead me too far; though, perhaps, it would not be so difficult as a person might at first expect, who should be told of all that has been written, with little satisfaction, upon the subject. I foresee a future period in our history, when a disquisition of this kind will be almost necessary; and, if I am spared to reach so far, I shall probably embrace the occasion. In the mean time I would just hint an observation or two on this head, which the intelligent reader, if he thinks them just, may apply as he sees proper.

1. Circumstantials and essentials in religion (if we speak with propriety) are derived from the same source, and resolved into the same authority. To consider the commands of God as essentials, and the inventions and traditions of men superadded thereto as circumstantials, would be a very improper, and, indeed, a very false division of the subject. Nothing but what is prescribed by the word of God, or may be fairly deduced from it, is worthy the name even of a circumstantial in true religion. Human appointments, if not repugnant to Scripture and the light of conscience, may be submitted to for the sake of peace, or when the general purposes of edification cannot be attained without them; but they seem not to deserve a

place even among the circumstantials of a religion which is of divine institution. All the laboured arguments, whether for or against the colour of a garment, the shape of a building, and a multitude of other things equally insignificant, seem to have occasioned a needless loss of time and temper, chiefly by a mistake of the question on both sides.

2. Essentials in Christianity are those things without which no man can be a Christian in the sight of God, and by the decision of his word; and, on the other hand, those things only are essential, which whoever possesses, is, by Scripture declaration, in a state of favour with God through Christ. These might be branched out into many particulars; but they are fully and surely comprised in two—faith and holiness. These are essential to the being of a Christian; are only to be found in a Christian; are infallible tokens that the possessor is accepted in the Beloved, and whoever dies without them must assuredly perish. These are essentials, because they are absolutely necessary; for it is written, "He that believeth not shall be damned,"* and, "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord:"† and they are essential likewise, because they demonstrate an interest in the promise of everlasting life. Thus our Lord declares, "He that heareth my "words, and believeth in him that sent me, "hath everlasting life, and shall not come into "condemnation, but is passed from death unto "life:"‡ and the apostle, writing to the believing Romans, tells them, "Now being made free from "sin, and become the servants of God, ye have "your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life."§ These, then, are the essentials of

* Mark, xvi. 16. † Heb. xii. 14. ‡ John, v. 24.
§ Rom. vi. 22.

religion; and though they are produced by the same power of the Holy Spirit, and derived from a knowledge of the same truths, and therefore cannot be separated, they may properly be distinguished, for the conviction of those who pretend to one without the other. The most specious appearances of holiness, which are not accompanied with faith in Christ, may be safely rejected as counterfeits. On the other hand, a profession of faith which is not evidenced by the fruits of holiness, by gracious tempers, and a tenour of life becoming the Gospel, is dead, delusory, and destructive.

If the question is removed another step, and it should be asked, which, or how many, of the doctrines of Scripture are necessary to produce the faith and holiness supposed requisite? it may suffice to say, that, in the nature of things, no person can be expected to believe in Christ, till convinced of his need of him, and of his ability, as a Saviour, fully to answer his expectations. And as a supreme love to God, and a hatred of all sin, are evidently included in the idea of holiness, it supposes a disposition of mind which every man's experience proves to be beyond the power of fallen nature; and therefore a competent knowledge and cordial acceptance of what the Scripture teaches concerning the nature and desert of sin, the person and mediatory acts of Christ, the causes, ends, and effects of his mediation, together with the necessity of that change of heart which is expressed by a being born again, appear to be essentially necessary to that faith and holiness which are described in the Gospel.

3. The circumstantials of religion include all those particulars of revelation which a person, possessed of the above-mentioned essentials, may

as yet be unacquainted with, or unable to judge of with certainty. A careful application to the Scripture, a diligent waiting upon God in prayer, and an improvement of the means of grace, will, by the divine blessing, which is promised to those who seek in this manner, increase our light, comprehension, and certainty, with regard to these points, which, though not essentially necessary to the being of a Christian, are exceedingly conducive to his well-being, to his growth and establishment in the truth.

This subject may be, perhaps, illustrated from the animal frame, in which what we call the vital parts may be considered as essential to life, because there can be no life without them. We may easily conceive that a man may live without an arm or leg, or several members and organs, which, though highly valuable for use and comfort, are not necessarily connected with life; but if we conceive of him as deprived of his head, heart, or lungs, we can no longer consider him as living; yet it is desirable to have a body not only animated, but organized. So likewise in religion, those who are truly partakers of it will not too curiously inquire, how much knowledge, or what degree of practice, is barely consistent with a possibility of life; but they will earnestly desire to be acquainted with the whole will of God, and that every part of it may have a suitable influence upon their practice. But, in the mean time, a consolation is provided, in the promises of God made to those who have received the seeds of faith and true holiness, against the fears, doubts, and involuntary mistakes which, from remaining ignorance, they are yet subject to. He will supply what is wanting, pardon what is amiss, and lead them on from strength to strength. They are to walk by

the light already afforded, to wait on him for an increase, to be diffident of themselves, and gentle to others; and things which as yet they know not, God will, in his due time, reveal to them. But to return from this digression.

V. Every part of St. Paul's history and writings demonstrates a disinterested spirit, and that his uncommon labours were directed to no other ends than the glory of God and the good of men. No man had, probably, so great an influence over his hearers, or could have a juster claim, from the nature and number of his services, to a suitable provision for himself; but he could say, with truth, "We seek not yours, but you." To cut off all occasions of misapprehension on this head, he usually submitted to work with his own hands rather than be chargeable to his friends.* It is true, he does not propose himself to us as a pattern in this respect, for he tells us "that "the labourer is worthy of his hire," and that "the Lord had ordained that those who preach "the Gospel should live by the Gospel;"† and when he saw it expedient, he did not refuse to be himself assisted by others. He showed, by accepting such assistance from some, that he understood his liberty, and did not act from a spirit of pride or singularity when he declined it; and, by his more general practice, he evidenced

* 1 Cor. ix. 18. That—"I may make the Gospel of Christ "without charge"—Αδαπανον θηφ, that I may set it before you *gratis*, or a free Gospel. The messengers of good news are usually gratified with a reward; but the apostle, though he brought the most welcome and important tidings that ever rejoiced the hearts of men, would not encumber or disgrace the news, by receiving any thing for it. The truth is, he took as much pleasure in delivering his message as they could in hearing it, and found his reward in his employment.

† 1 Cor. ix. 14.

that he was superior to all selfish and mercenary motives; and, upon the whole, he was content to appear and live as a poor man. And though he had learnt in the school of Christ, how to abound, as well as to suffer want, the latter seems to have been more frequently his lot.* He saw too many false teachers, who, under the sanction of a sacred character, made merchandise of souls, and he not only severely censured them, but by this self-denial, which they were unable to imitate, he manifested the vanity of their pretences in setting themselves forth as the apostles of Christ. This seems to have been his chief design in it, and the reason of his repeating, with so much earnestness, his determination to take nothing from the Corinthians, who were too much inclined to listen to some of these teachers, to his disadvantage. But whatever parade they might make of gifts or zeal, or however they might presume to equal themselves to him in other respects; he knew they would not attempt to share with him in the glory of preaching the Gospel freely, which was diametrically inconsistent with their whole design. The circumstances with us are so far different, that, in proposing St. Paul as a pattern of disinterestedness, we do not lay a stress upon his preaching the Gospel without expense to his hearers; yet, in his noble contempt of worldly advantage, and making every thing stoop to the great ends of his mission, he stands as a precedent to all Christian ministers in succeeding times. In those passages of his epistles to Timothy and Titus, where the negative part of a minister's character (whether bishop or deacon) is given, this is constantly one branch of it, that he must not be influenced by a love of gain; and as con-

* Phil. iv. 12.

stantly the word is compounded with the epithet, *filthy*—"not given to filthy lucre;" to intimate that nothing can be more dishonest or dishonourable than to make a traffic of this service. Nor is this the judgement of Scripture only, but the general voice of mankind. Nothing is a greater bar to a minister's usefulness, or renders his person and labours more contemptible, than a known attachment to money, a griping fist, and a hard heart. They who enter into the priest's office for a piece of bread, who are less concerned for the flock than the fleece, who employ all their arts and influence to exchange a less emolument for a greater, or to superadd one to another, may have the reward they seek; but of all the methods of acquiring wealth, which do not directly expose a man to the lash of human laws, this is the most to be lamented and avoided. If the Scriptures are true; if St. Paul was a servant of Christ, and if the authority of his precepts and example is still binding, a day will come when mercenary preachers will wish they had begged their bread from door to door, or been chained to the oar of a galley for life, rather than have presumed to intrude into the church upon such base and unworthy views. It is to be feared that too many read the awful denunciations upon this head, in the prophets Jeremiah* and Ezekiel,† with indifference, as supposing they only relate to the Jews who lived at that time; but they are equally applicable to all who prostitute the word and worship of God to the purposes of ambition and avarice.

VI. From the foregoing particulars we may collect the idea of true Christian zeal, as exemplified in our apostle. Hardly any word in our

* Jer. xxiii. † Ezek. xiii. and xxxiv.

language is more misunderstood or abused, than *zeal.** It is used in the New Testament indifferently in a good or bad sense, and it is considered as a vice or virtue, according to its object and principle. It sometimes denotes envy,† indignation, or disdain, an obstinate and ignorant opposition to the truth, a misguided warmth in unnecessary things, and a contentious, disputatious temper. A zeal replete with these characters has too frequently been the bane and opprobrium of the Christian church; but it is good to be zealously affected in a good thing, and then it is sinful to be otherwise. Our passions were not given us in vain. When the judgement is well informed, and the understanding duly enlightened by the word of God, the more warmth the better; but this earnestness, in an ignorant or prejudiced person, is dangerous and hurtful to himself and others: it is like haste in a man in the dark, who knows not where he is going, nor what mischiefs he may suffer or occasion. False zeal spends its strength in defence of names and forms, the externals of religion, or the inventions of men; it enforces its

* All religious parties profess a great regard to the precept, Jude, iii. "Contend earnestly for the faith." And if noisy anger, bold assertions, harsh censures, and bitter persecuting zeal, can singly or jointly answer the apostle's design, there is hardly a party but may glory in their obedience. But if the weapons of our warfare are not carnal; if the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God; if the true Christian contention can only be maintained by Scripture arguments, meekness, patience, prayer, and an exemplary conversation—if this is the true state of the case, where is the church or party (may I not say, where is the person) that has not still much to learn and to practice in this point?

† Compare Acts, v. 17.; Rom. xiii. 13.; Rom. x. 2.; Phil. iii. 6.; Gal. i. 14.; Acts, xxi. 20.; James, iii. 16.; in all which places the word is the same that is rendered *zeal* in 2 Cor. ix. 2.; Col. iv. 13.; John, ii. 17.

edicts by compulsion and severity: it would willingly call for fire from heaven; but, unable to do this, it kindles the flame of persecution, and, if not providentially restrained, wages war with the peace, comfort, and liberty of all who disdain to wear its chains, and breathes threatening, slaughter, and destruction with an unrelenting spirit: its mildest weapons (which it never employs alone, except where it is checked by a superior power), are calumny, contempt, and hatred; and the objects it seeks to worry are generally the quiet in the land, and those who worship God in spirit and in truth: in a word it resembles the craft by which it works, and is earthly, sensual, devilish. But the true Christian zeal is a heavenly gentle flame: it shines and warms, but knows not to destroy: it is the spirit of Christ, infused with a sense of his love into the heart: it is a generous philanthropy and benevolence, which, like the light of the sun, diffuses itself to every object, and longs to be the instrument of good, if possible, to the whole race of mankind. A sense of the worth of souls, the importance of unseen things, and the awful condition of unawakened sinners, makes it, indeed, earnest and importunate; but this it shows not by bitterness and constraint, but by an unwearied perseverance in attempting to overcome evil with good.* It returns blessings for curses,

* See Rom. xii. 20, 21. This practice the apostle recommends by the metaphor of heaping coals of fire on an enemy's head. As metals that endure a moderate warmth, without alteration, are melted down and quite dissolved by an intense heat, so the hard heart, even of an enemy, may be sometimes softened by a series, an indefatigable heaping up of favours and obligations. This is a noble piece of chemistry, but almost as much out of repute and practice as the search after the philosopher's stone.

prayers for ill treatment, and, though often reviled and affronted, cannot be discouraged from renewed efforts to make others partakers of the happiness itself possesses. It knows how to express a becoming indignation against the errors and follies of men, but towards their persons* it is all gentleness and compassion; it weeps (and would, if possible, weep tears of blood) over those who will not be persuaded; but, while it plainly represents the consequences of their obstinacy, it trembles at† its own declarations, and feels for them who cannot feel for themselves: it is often grieved, but cannot be provoked. The zealous Christian is strictly observant of his own failings, candid and tender to the faults of others; he knows what allowances are due to the frailty of human nature and the temptations of the present state, and willingly makes all the allowances possible; and though he dare not call evil good, cannot but judge according to the rule of the Scripture, yet he will

* When St. Paul, speaking of the Judaizing false teachers and their adherents, says, "I would they were even cut off which "trouble you," he seems to allude to the circumcision they so strenuously enforced, Gal. v. 12. Compare Phil. iii. 2. His wish concerning these sectaries has been often perverted, to give sanction to the rage of persecutors; but he does not mean to cut them off with fire and sword, or to cut them off from fire and water, but to have them excluded from communion and converse with true believers.

† How awful to declare, to denounce the terrors of the Lord! those terrors which are represented to us by fire unquenchable, with the additional idea of eternity, Matt. iii. 12., Mark, ix. 43. As such descriptions shock and alarm a guilty conscience, there are two different methods by which the removal of this alarm is attempted. Some seek and find peace and security from the blood of Jesus; and some, who are not pleased with this method, satisfy themselves and their friends with criticisms upon the terms, and tell us that the phrase "for ever and ever" signifies a limited space; and "fire that cannot be quenched," denotes fire that goes out of itself.

conceal the infirmities of men as much as he can, will not speak of them without just cause, much less will he aggravate the case, or boast himself over them. Such was the zeal of our apostle: bold and intrepid in the cause of God and truth, unwearied in service, inflexible in danger; when duty called he was not to be restrained either by the threats of enemies, the solicitations of friends, or the prospect of any hardships to which he might be exposed. He cheerfully endured hunger and thirst, watching and weariness, poverty and contempt, and counted not his life dear, so that he might fulfil the great purposes of the ministry which he had received of the Lord. But at the same time, in all his intercourse with men, he was gentle, mild, and compassionate; he studied the peace, and accommodated himself to the weakness, of all about him: when he might command, he used entreaties; when he met with hard and injurious treatment, he bore it patiently, and, if opportunity offered, requited it with kindness. Thus as he had drunk of the spirit, so he walked in the steps of his Lord and Master.

All who bear the name of ministers of Christ, would do well to examine how far their tempers and conduct are conformable to St. Paul's. Are there not too many who widely differ from him? Where he was immoveable as an iron pillar, they are flexible and yielding as a reed waving in the wind, suiting their doctrines and practice to the depraved taste of the world, and prostituting their talents and calling to the unworthy pursuit of ambition and applause. On the other hand, in things less essential, or not commanded, they invade the rights of private judgement, and attempt to bind *

* Matt. xxiii. 4. "They bind heavy burdens, and grievous to be "borne," a weight of traditions and observances, "and lay them

heavy yokes and impositions upon those whom Christ has made free; and while they readily tolerate (if not countenance) scepticism and immorality, they exert all their strength and subtilty to disquiet or suppress those who differ from them in the slightest circumstance, if they profess to differ for conscience' sake. But Jesus has no such ministers: their claim is utterly vain; none but those who are ignorant of the plainest truths can allow them this character; their tempers, their behaviour, the tenour of their professed instructions, and the total want of efficacy and influence in their ministrations, plainly demonstrate that he neither sent them nor owns them.

VII. Having considered the subject-matter and the leading views of the apostle's ministry, it may not be improper to take some notice of his manner as a preacher. This he reminds the Corinthians of. They were reputed a polite and ingenious people. St. Paul was aware of their character, and expresses himself as if he had been deliberating before he saw them, in what way he should address them with the fairest probability of success. He tells them, * that he determined to know nothing among them but Jesus Christ, and him crucified, including, in this one comprehensive expression, the whole scheme of Gospel doctrine; and as to the manner in which he delivered this doctrine, he says, "My speech and my preaching "was not with enticing words of man's wisdom,

"them upon men's shoulders, but they themselves will not move "them with one of their fingers." There is a double opposition in this passage—between to *be borne* and to *move*, and between the *shoulders* and a *finger*. It has been often found since, that those who are most impatient of restraint themselves, are most earnest in pressing yokes and bonds upon others.

* 1 Cor. ii. 1—4.

"but in demonstration of the Spirit and with "power." We are sure that he did not renounce justness of reasoning or propriety of expression: in these respects he exceeded their most admired orators, as may appear to any who have skill and candour to compare his epistles and discourses (in the original) with the best performances of the Greek writers; but he renounced "the enticing," or plausible, "words of man's wisdom." In the term "man's wisdom," I apprehend may be included whatever the natural faculties of man are capable of discovering or receiving, independent of the peculiar teaching of the Spirit of God, which is promised and restrained to those who, sensible of their own foolishness, are brought to believe in Jesus Christ, the wisdom of God; and "the en-"ticing words" of man's wisdom may include all those ways and arts which the wise men of the world have used, or approved, as most effectual to express, adorn, or defend their own wise sentiments and discoveries.* These, and the methods of setting them off to advantage, have been divided into many branches, and dignified with sounding names; but all the efforts of man's wisdom, considered as engaged in the subjects of religion and morals, may be summed up in three particulars: 1. A

* In 1 Cor. xiv. 9, St. Paul recommends "words easy to be "understood." His reasoning in that chapter is levelled not only against the absurdity of speaking in an unknown tongue, but against the use of any terms, or the treating upon any subjects, which are not adapted to the level of the auditory. Many discourses that are expressed in English phrases, are as useless to the bulk of the people as if they were delivered in Greek; for what have the people to do with scholastic or metaphysical niceties, or curious researches into antiquity, or elegant dissertations upon the fitness of things? They cannot understand them; and if they could, they would find them nothing to their purpose

vain inquiry into things which lie wholly beyond the capacity of man in his present state, and which can only be discovered by supernatural revelation: 2. A vain attempt to account for every thing according to the light and principles of depraved reason: 3. A studious exactness in language, either an easy flow of words to please and amuse the ear, or a torrent of strong and figurative expressions to engage the passions, according as a different taste or fashion happens to prevail. It would be too dry a task to illustrate these points, by adducing specimens of each from the works of the ancient and modern philosophers; but if we had not other employment in hand, it would be easy to show that man's wisdom, in the first sense, is Uncertainty; in the second, Prejudice; in the third, Imposition and artifice. It is sufficient for my present purpose, that the apostle renounced them all. Instead of vain conjectures,* he spoke from certain experience; he could say, "I re- "ceived of the Lord, that which I also delivered "to you:" instead of accommodating his doctrine to the taste and judgement of his hearers, he spoke with authority, in the name of God whom he served: instead of losing time in measuring words and syllables, that he might obtain the character of a fine speaker, he spoke, from the feeling and fulness of his heart, the words of simplicity and

* Though the apostle disclaimed the light sophistry which obtained in the schools, the tenour of his preaching was founded upon the clearest principles, and contained a chain of the justest consequences. He did not only assert, but prove and demonstrate, the truth of his doctrines, by ancient prophecies, by recent facts, and by a present incontestable efficacy. Yet it is called the "demonstration of the Spirit," to intimate that the strongest and best adapted evidence is insufficient to the purposes of salvation, unless accompanied with a divine power.

truth. The success of his preaching did not at all depend upon the softness and harmony of his periods, and therefore he disdained an attention to those petty ornaments of speech, which were quite necessary to help out the poverty of "man's wis-"dom;" he sought something else, which those who preach themselves rather than Christ Jesus the Lord, have little reason to expect;* I mean, the power and demonstration of the Spirit. He knew that this alone could give him success; and ministers may learn from him, what to avoid and what to seek for, if they would be useful to their hearers. Men can but declare the truths of the Gospel; it is the Spirit of God who alone can reveal them: nothing less than a divine power can present them to the mind in their just importance, and throw light into the soul by which they may be perceived; nothing less than this power can subdue the will, and open the heart to receive the truth in the love of it: without this concurring agency, even St. Paul would have preached in vain. From what has been said, we may remark two obvious reasons, amongst others, why we have so much unsuccessful preaching in our days: either the Gospel truths are given up, or the Gospel simplicity departed from. Where either of these is the case, the Lord refuses his power and blessing.

* A man who has languages and science in his head, but does not know or relish the Gospel of Christ, is an ignorant, indeed, a stupid person, unaffected with the grandest view of wisdom, power, and goodness, that ever was, or can be displayed; and whoever truly knows and embraces this mystery of godliness, is a wise man, a person of an excellent understanding, though he may not be much acquainted with those uncertain, unsatisfying systems which men have agreed to honour with the name of knowledge. See Ps. cxi. 10.

VIII. Another observable part of St. Paul's character, is his unaffected humility. In the midst of his eminent and extensive services, he retained a deep sense of the part he once acted against the Lord. He speaks of himself, on this account, in the most abasing language, as the chief of sinners, and strongly expresses his unworthiness of the grace and apostleship he had received, by comparing himself to an untimely birth; * and though his insight into the mysteries of the Gospel, the communion he maintained with God by faith in his Son, and the beauty of holiness which shone in his conversation, were all beyond the common measure; yet having, in the same proportion, a clearer sense of his obligations, and of the extent and purity of the divine precepts, he thought nothing of his present attainments, in comparison of those greater degrees of grace he was still pressing after. † While, in the eyes of others, he appeared not only exemplary, but unequalled, he esteemed himself less than the least of all saints; ‡ and his patience and condescension towards others, and

* 1 Cor. xv. 8. "As one born out of due time." The original word is Εκτρωμα, that is, *an abortion*. He speaks of himself under this despicable image (the true sense of which is not easily perceived by an English reader), to show the deep and humbling sense he retained of the part he once acted against the church of Christ. He considered himself as unworthy and contemptible to the last degree, as one of whom no good hope could be justly formed at that time, much less that he should be honoured with a sight of the Lord Jesus from heaven, and with a call to the apostolic office.

† Phil. iii. 13. "Forgetting the things that are behind." As a traveller upon urgent business posts from place to place, forgets the distance and inconveniences behind him, and has all his thoughts taken up with the place he would be at, and the remainder of the road that leads to it.

‡ Eph. iii. 8.

his acquiescence under all the trying dispensations of providence with which he was exercised, were a proof that this was not an affected manner of expression, but the genuine dictate of his heart. To speak of one's self in abasing terms is easy: and such lauguage is often a thin veil, through which the motions of pride may be easily discerned; but though the language of humility may be counterfeited, its real fruits and actings are inimitable. Here again he is a pattern for Christians. An humble frame of mind is the strength and ornament of every other grace, and the proper soil wherein they grow. A proud Christian, that is, one who has a high conceit of his own abilities and attainments, is no less a contradiction, than a sober drunkard, or a generous miser. All other seeming excellences are of no real value, unless accompanied with this; and though a person should appear to have little more than a consciousness of his own insufficiency, and a teachable dependent spirit, and is waiting upon the Lord, in his appointed way, for instruction and a blessing, he will infallibly thrive as a tree planted by the waterside; for God, who resisteth the proud, has promised to give grace to the humble.* But, in an especial manner, humility is necessary and beautiful in a minister. The greatest abilities and most unwearied diligence will not ensure success without it; a secret (if allowed) apprehension of his own importance, will deprive him of that assistance, without which he can do nothing; "his "arm will be dried up, and his right eye will be "darkened;"† for the Lord of hosts hath purposed to stain the pride of all human glory, and will honour none but those who abase themselves, and

* James, iv. 6. † Zech. xi. 17.

are willing to give all the praise to him alone. If any man had ground to set a value upon his knowledge, gifts, and services, St. Paul might justly claim the pre-eminence. But though he was an apostle, and an inspired writer, though he had planted churches through a considerable part of the known world, though he was received as an angel by many to whom he preached, and, by a peculiar favour, had been caught up into the third heaven; yet he was, by grace, preserved from being exalted above measure, or from assuming an undue superiority over his brethren. The authority with which he was intrusted he employed solely to their advantage, and accounted himself the least of all, and the servant of all. How very opposite has been the conduct of many since his time, who have aimed to appropriate the name of ministers of Christ exclusively to themselves!

Such was our apostle, and the same spirit (though in an inferior degree) will be found in all the faithful ministers of the Lord Jesus. They love his name; it is the pleasing theme of their ministry, and to render it glorious in the eyes of sinners is the great study of their lives. For his sake they love all who love him, and are their willing servants to promote the comfort and edification of their souls. They love his Gospel, faithfully proclaim it, without disguise or alteration, and shun not to declare the whole counsel of God, so far as they are themselves acquainted with it. They contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints; and are desirous to preserve and maintain the truth, in its power and purity. The knowledge of their own weakness and fallibility makes them tender to the weaknesses of others; and though they dare not lay, or allow, any other foundation than that which God has laid in Zion, yet, knowing

that the kingdom of God does not consist in meats and drinks, but in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, they guard against the influence of a party spirit: and, if their labours are confined to Christians of one denomination, their love and prayers are not limited within such narrow bounds, but extend to all who love and serve their Master. They have entered upon the ministry, not for low and sordid ends, for popular applause, or filthy lucre, but from a constraining sense of the love of Jesus, and a just regard to the worth and danger of immortal souls. Their zeal is conducted and modelled by the example and precepts of their Lord; their desire is not to destroy, but to save; and they wish their greatest enemies a participation in their choicest blessings. In the subject-matter and the manner of their preaching, they show that they seek not to be men-pleasers, but to commend the truth to every man's conscience in the sight of God; and when they have done their utmost, and when God has blessed their labours, and given them acceptance and success beyond their hopes, they are conscious of the defects and evils attending their best endeavours, of the weak influence the truths they preach to others have upon their own hearts; that their sufficiency of every kind is of God, and not of themselves; and therefore they sit down, ashamed, as unprofitable servants, and can rejoice or glory in nothing but in him who came into the world to save the chief of sinners.

It might be expected that a spirit and conduct thus uniformly benevolent and disinterested, and witnessed to, in a greater or less degree, by the good effect of their ministry and example amongst their hearers, would secure them the good-will of mankind, and entitle them to peace, if not to respect. But, on the contrary, these are the very

people who are represented as deceivers of souls, and disturbers of society; they are not permitted to live in some places, and it is owing to a concurrence of favourable circumstances if they are permitted to speak in any; the eyes of many are upon them, watching for their halting; their infirmities are aggravated, their expressions wrested, their endeavours counteracted, and their persons despised. The design of our history is to show, in the course of every period of the church, that those who have approached nearest to the character I have attempted to delineate from St. Paul, have always met with such treatment;* and from his declaration, that "all who live godly in Christ "Jesus shall suffer persecution,"† we may expect it will always be so, while human nature and the state of the world remain as they are. However, it may be a consolation to those who suffer for righteousness sake, to reflect, that the apostles were treated thus before them; particularly St. Paul, who, as he laboured, so he suffered more abundantly than the rest. His person was treated with contempt and despite, his character traduced, his doctrine misrepresented: and, though his natural and acquired abilities were great, and he spoke with power and the demonstration of the Spirit, yet he was esteemed the filth and off-scouring of all things, a babbler,‡ and a madman.§

* Our Lord's declaration, "Behold I send you forth as lambs "in the midst of wolves," is applicable to all his servants. The sight of a lamb is sufficient to provoke the rage and appetite of a wolf. Thus the spirit of the Gospel awakens the rage and opposition of the world; they have an antipathy to it, and owe it a grudge wherever they see it.

† 2 Tim. iii. 12. ‡ Acts, xvii. 18.

§ 2 Cor. v. 13. See likewise Mark, iii. 21. "And when his "friends heard it, they went out to lay hold on him; for they "said, He is beside himself;" that is to say, his attention to the

CHAPTER III.

Of the Irregularities and Offences which appeared in the Apostolic Churches.

THERE are few things in which the various divisions of professing Christians are so generally agreed as in speaking highly and honourably of primitive Christianity. In many persons this is no more than an ignorant admiration, not capable of distinguishing what is truly praiseworthy, but disposed to applaud every thing in the gross that has the sanction of antiquity to recommend it. The primitive Christians have been looked upon, by some, as if they were not men of the same nature and infirmities with ourselves, but nearly infallible and perfect. This is often taken for granted in general, and when particulars are insisted on, it is observable that they are seldom taken from the records of the New Testament, and the churches which flourished in the apostles'

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office he has undertaken has transported him beyond the bounds of reason, and made him forget his station, his friends, and his safety; therefore, out of pure affection and prudence, they would have confined him; nor is it any wonder that our Lord's friends and relatives should thus think and speak of him, since we are assured that even his brethren did not believe on him: John, vii. 5. And there seems to have been no possible medium. All who were conversant with him must either receive him as the Messiah, or pity, if not despise him, as a madman. This was the mildest judgement they could form. The Pharisees, indeed, went farther, and pronounced him an impostor and a devil. Such was the treatment our Lord and Master found. Let not then his disciples and servants be surprised or grieved that they are misrepresented and misunderstood, on account of their attachment to him, but let them comfort themselves with his gracious words. John, xv. 18—21.

times, but rather from those who lived in and after the second century, when a considerable deviation in doctrine, spirit, and conduct, from those which were indeed the primitive churches, had already taken place, and there were evident appearances of that curiosity, ambition, and will worship, which increased, by a swift progress, till, at length, professed Christianity degenerated into little more than an empty name.

If Christians of the early ages are supposed to have been more exemplary than in after-periods, chiefly because they lived nearer to the times of our Lord and his apostles, it will follow of course, that the earlier the better. We may then expect to find most of the Christian spirit among those who were converted and edified by the apostles' personal ministry; and though we cannot allow the assumption (for the power of godliness depends not upon dates, periods, or instruments, but upon the influences of the Holy Spirit), yet we are content to join issue upon the conclusion, and are willing that all claims to a revival of religion, and a real reformation of manners, shall be admitted or rejected, as they accord or disagree with the accounts we have of the churches planted by the apostles, and during the time that these authorized ministers of Christ presided over them. We can find no other period in which we can, to so much advantage, propose the visible churches of Christ as a pattern and specimen of what his grace and Gospel may be expected to produce in the present state of human nature; for the apostles were furnished, in an extraordinary manner, with zeal, wisdom, and authority for their work, and God was remarkably present with them by the power of his Spirit. Besides, as all the information we have concerning this period is derived from the

inspired writings, we have that certainty of facts to ground our observations upon, which no other history can afford.

We have a pleasing description of the first of these churches, which was formed at Jerusalem soon after our Lord's ascension. On the day of Pentecost, many, who had personally consented to the death of Jesus, received power to believe in his name, and publicly joined themselves to his disciples. A sense of his love and grace to each, united the whole body so closely together, that, though they were a multitude of several thousands, it is said, they "were of one heart and "of one soul; neither said any of them, that ought "of the things which he possessed was his own, "but they had all things common,"* "and they "continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine "and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in "prayers." These were happy times indeed! No interfering interests or jarring sentiments, no subtle or factious spirits, no remissness in the means of grace, no instances of a conduct in any respect unbecoming the Gospel, were to be found among them; it seemed as if the powerful sense of divine truths which they had received had overborne, if not extirpated, every evil disposition in so large an assembly. Yet even this (the difference of numbers excepted) is no peculiar case. The like has been observable again and again, when God has been pleased to honour ministers, far inferior to the apostles, with a sudden and signal influence, in places where the power of the Gospel had been little known before. In such circumstances the truth has been often impressed and received with astonishing effects. Many who

* Acts, iv. 32

before were dead in trespasses and sins, having been, like those of old, pierced to the heart, and then filled with comfort, from a believing knowledge of him on whom their sins were laid, find themselves, as it were, in a new world; old things are past away; the objects of time and sense appear hardly worth their notice; the love of Christ constrains them, and they burn in love to all who join with them in praising their Saviour. Here, indeed, is a striking change wrought; yet the infirmities inseparable from human nature, though for the present overpowered, will, as occasions arise, discover themselves again, so far as to prove two things universally: 1. That the best of men are still liable to mistakes and weaknesses, for which they will have cause to mourn to the end of their lives: 2. That in the best times there will be some intruders, who, for a season, may make a profession, and yet, in the end, appear to have neither part nor lot in the matter. Thus it was in the church of Jerusalem. The pleasing state of things mentioned above did not continue very long: an Ananias and a Sapphira, were soon found amongst them, who sought the praise of men, and made their profession a cloak for covetousness and hypocrisy:* grudgings and murmurings arose in a little time between the Jews and the Hellenists:† and it was not long before they were thrown into strong debates, and in danger of divisions, upon account of the question first started at Antioch, whether the law of Moses was still in force to believers or not.‡

In these later times, when it has been attempted to vindicate and illustrate a revival of religion, by appealing to the writings of St. Paul, and the de-

* Acts, v. † Acts, vi. ‡ Acts, xv.

lineation he has given us of the faith and practice of a Christian, the attempt has often excited disdain. It has been thought a sufficient answer to enumerate and exaggerate the faults, mistakes, and inconsistencies (or what the world is pleased to account such), that are charged upon the persons concerned in such an appeal, as necessarily proving that, where these blemishes are found, there can be no resemblance to the first Christians. If the frequency did not lessen the wonder, it might seem very unaccountable that any person who has read the New Testament, should venture upon this method in a Protestant country, where the people have the Scripture in their hands, and are at liberty to judge for themselves. But as there are not a few, even among Protestants, who seem to expect their assertions will pass for proofs, I propose, in this chapter, to point out several things, which, though undoubtedly wrong, had a considerable prevalence among the first Christians, leaving the application to the judicious reader. I acknowledge my firm persuasion that a certain system of doctrine, revived of late years, is the doctrine of the reformation, and of the New Testament, which, though not suited to the general and prevailing taste, is attended, more or less, with the blessing and power of God, in turning sinners from darkness to light. I confess, that both ministers and people who espouse this despised cause have sufficient ground for humiliation. We have seen, we still see, many things amongst us which we cannot approve; we fear that too many are a real discredit to the cause they profess, and we are conscious that the best of us fall mournfully short of what might be expected from the sublime principles which, by the grace of God, we have been taught from his word. We desire to be

open to conviction, not to contend for errors, or even to vindicate any thing that can be proved contrary to the Scripture; but if some things not justifiable, which we must own have accompanied what we verily believe to be a work of the Spirit of God, are (as some would represent them) sufficient to discredit this work, to impeach the truth of the doctrines or the sincerity of the instruments in the gross—then we are sure it will follow, upon the same principles, that the Jews and Heathens had just ground and warrant to reject the doctrine of the apostles, and to treat their persons with contempt.

A competent knowledge and consideration of the present state of man, in himself, and of the circumstances in which he is placed, are necessary to preserve us from being offended with the Gospel of Christ, on account of the imperfections that may be found in the conduct of those who have sincerely received it. Due allowances must be made for the remains of ignorance and prejudice, the power of habit, temper, and constitution, in different persons. The various combinations of these, and other particulars, make each individual character, though agreeing in one common nature, and influenced by the same general principles, in some respects an original. The power and subtilty of Satan, and his address in suiting his temptations to the peculiar inclinations and situation of every person, must be taken into the account; and likewise the immense variety of occasions arising from without, such as the provocations and arts of enemies, the influence of mistaken friends, the necessary engagements, connexions, and relations of common life, the artifices of seducers, and the scandals of false professors. These things, and others which might be named, concur to make the path of duty exceeding difficult, especially to young

beginners; who, so soon as they become sincerely desirous to serve the Lord, find themselves immediately in the midst of scenes, in which they can only be fitted to act their parts aright by a gradual and painful experience. They whose intentions are right usually set out with warm hearts and sanguine expectations, little aware of the difficulties that are before them. They have, indeed, a sure rule to act by in the Scripture, and they have a sure promise, that the Spirit of God will be their guide and teacher; but at first they have but little acquaintance with the Scripture, and, till they are humbled, by being left to commit many mortifying mistakes, they are too prone to lean to their own understandings. Every day brings them into some new difficulty, wherein they can get little direction from what they have passed through before; and often emergencies are so pressing as hardly to leave room for deliberation: in short, it seems to be the Lord's pleasure, not so much to preserve them from mistakes and indiscretions at first, as to take occasion to humble them upon this account, and to show them how to correct them when made. Thus they are more confirmed in a sense of their own weakness and of his goodness, and are trained up, by time, observation, and repeated trials, to a more perfect exercise of every branch of Christian wisdom. By degrees their judgements are formed to greater maturity; they are more jealous of themselves, more acquainted with Satan's devices, more capable of distinguishing the spirit and conduct of mankind, and especially more simply dependent upon God for his teaching and direction; and thus they grow into a participation of the spirit of the Gospel, and are enabled to act and speak as becomes the servants of Christ. When his Gospel is faithfully preached and cordially received, there always will be some who are able, by the grace of God, to put

to silence the ignorance of foolish men, and to demean themselves so, that, if any will speak evil of them, the shame is retorted upon themselves. But, among the numbers who are forming in the same school, there will likewise be some (for the reasons I have suggested), whose conduct will, in some respects, be liable to censure, though their hearts are sincere, and there will frequently be others, who (like the hearers compared by our Lord to seed sown upon rocky ground), will thrust themselves amongst professors, be called by the same name, and accounted by the world the same people, who at length discover themselves to be mere hypocrites. These, indeed, will furnish occasion enough for exception; and they who are glad to have it so, will readily suppose, or pretend, that they are all alike. It remains to show that, in this sense, there is no new thing under the sun. It was so from the beginning.

The apostle Paul bears an honourable testimony to the sincerity, zeal, and grace of the believers amongst whom he had preached, and to whom he had written. He commends their work of faith and labour of love; he styles them his joy, his glory, and his crown; and expresses his confidence that the Lord, who had begun a good work in them, would assuredly complete it. But though he knew there were many persons among them who were established in the truth, and judicious in their conduct; his admonitions, upon several occasions, show there were others whose judgements were weak, and behaviour unwarrantable.

He speaks of the Corinthians* as a people enriched in the knowledge of Christ, and honoured with an eminency of gifts. Yet he takes notice of

* 1 Cor. i. 5.

many things blameable in them; insomuch that, if the people who now censure appearances of a religious kind, because they are not wholly free from imperfection, could have had opportunity to judge of the Christians at Corinth in the same spirit, it is probable they would have despised and condemned those whom the apostle loved, as much as they can possibly do any set of people now.

They had first received the Gospel from St. Paul, but it had been confirmed to them afterwards by other ministers. The servants of Christ all preach the same truths; but the Holy Spirit, who furnishes them all for the work he appoints them to, distributes to each one severally, according to his own will. He communicates a diversity of gifts, not all to one person, but each has a talent given him to profit withal. One is favoured with a peculiar insight into the mysteries of the Gospel, another has a power and pathos of expression, and another is happy in a facility of applying to distressed and wounded consciences. It is the duty and privilege of Christians to avail themselves of these different talents, to profit by each, to be thankful for all, and to esteem every faithful minister very highly for his work's sake. But the Corinthians were unduly influenced by personal attachments, as their several inclinations led them. They formed imprudent comparisons and preferences, were divided into parties, and drawn into contentions, upon this account; one saying, I am of Paul; another, I am of Apollos, or I of Cephas:* they thought it a mark of zeal to be strenuous for their respective favourites; but St. Paul assured them that it was a sign they were weak and low in the Christian life, and a means to

* 1 Cor. i. 12.; iii. 4.

keep them so. Disputes and prepossessions of this kind draw the mind away from its proper nourishment, and afford occasion for the various workings of our selfish passions. Wherever the Lord is pleased to raise up, in or near the same place, ministers who are of eminence in their different gifts, the effects of this spirit will be more or less observable; and it is eagerly observed by the world, and amplified to the utmost, as a weighty objection. The ministers are represented to be artful designing men, who, under the sacred names of Christ and the Gospel, are aiming chiefly or solely to form a party of dependants upon themselves; and the people are accounted silly sheep, carried away captive by the influence of their popular leaders, insomuch that they cannot, or dare not, receive the doctrines they profess to love from any but their own favourites. The disposition is certainly wrong; but let it be censured with candour, not as the peculiarity of this or that party, but as a fault which human nature is always prone to in a similar circumstance. It showed a want of solid judgement in the Corinthians, but was no impeachment of their sincerity; much less did it prove that Paul, Apollos, or Cephas, were mercenary ambitious men, who prostituted their talents and influence to gain disciples to themselves rather than to Christ. The same premises will admit of no stronger conclusion now than in the apostles' days.

The proper design and tendency of the religion of Jesus is, to wean the affections from the world, to mortify the dictates of self-love, and to teach us, by his example, to be gentle, forbearing, benevolent, and disinterested. This the world is aware of; and, though they declare their dislike to the principles which alone can produce such a spirit, they always expect it from the people who profess

them; and, therefore, when, amongst the numbers of these, they can find a few instances of persons too much actuated by selfish, worldly, or angry tempers, it is eagerly objected, "These are "excellent people, if you would judge of them "by the length and frequency of their devotions, "and by what they have to say of their per- "suasion of God's love to them; but touch them "in their property, and they show themselves as "unwilling to forego, and as anxious to grasp, the "good things of this world, as if they had no "better claim to heaven than ourselves." It is much to be lamented that such occasions of reproach are afforded to those who seek them. But what would they have said of the Corinthians whom the apostle reproves in the following terms: "Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, "because ye go to law one with another: why do ye "not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer "yourselves to be defrauded? Nay, ye do wrong "and defraud, and that your brethren."* And, in the preceding chapter, he speaks of an enormity among them hardly to be heard of among the Heathens: which, though the fault of one person, brought dishonour upon them all, because they had not explicitly disowned it, and proceeded against the offender. This is not to be wondered at; for we have often seen, in our own time, that though evil practices have been censured in the strongest terms of disallowance, and the offenders publicly and notoriously disclaimed, yet many will still be so destitute of candour and equity as to insist on it, "They are all alike."

The irregularities in the public worship at Corinth were such as, if practised amongst ourselves, would excite a greater clamour than any

* 1 Cor. vi. 7, 8.

thing of that nature which has been hitherto complained of. It appears, that, far from conducting their assemblies with decency and order, they were sometimes in the greatest confusion. Different persons had a psalm, a doctrine, a tongue, a revelation, an interpretation, many speaking together, and sometimes in different languages; so that the apostle thought it very probable that, if an unbeliever came in amongst them, he would, of course, say they were mad.* And this want of decorum extended to their celebration of the Lord's supper, where, says the apostle, "every "one taketh before another: and one is hungry, "and another is drunken."† I apprehend that these instances of disorder cannot be paralleled by the most irregular proceedings in our time, amongst any people that hold the principles which I am at present engaged to vindicate.

Many of the Corinthians, as well as the Galatians, had discovered great unsteadiness towards St. Paul, and had been seduced by false teachers and pretended apostles.‡ Inexperienced minds are very liable to such deceptions: meaning well themselves, they are too apt to listen to the fair words and fine speeches of those who lie in wait

* 1 Cor. xiv. 23. † 1 Cor. xi. 21.

‡ Yet he says of the Galatians, that when he first went among them, they received him as an angel of God, and, if possible, would have plucked out their own eyes to have given them to him, Gal. iv. 15. Great is the power of the Gospel; it subdues and possesses the heart, and conciliates a tenderness and relation between ministers and people, nearer and dearer than the ties of flesh and blood. But, alas, how great likewise is the inconstancy of mortals! The apostle experienced it to his grief; and where he had the greatest prospect, he was most disappointed. Those who once would have plucked out their own eyes for his service, afterwards accounted him their enemy for telling them the truth. We need not therefore wonder if there are instances of this kind at present.

to deceive. The love of Christ, and the love of holiness, are the leading properties of a gracious heart; and such an one, till experience has made him wise, conceives a good opinion of all who profess a regard for Jesus, or for sanctification. He is not aware, at first, that there are those in the world who attempt to divide what God has joined together. When the blood and righteousness of Christ are recommended, not as the source, but as a substitute for vital, experimental religion, or when some other spirit is preached than that whose office it is to testify of Jesus; in either case the food of the soul is poisoned, and the evil begins to operate before it is perceived. Faithful ministers are accounted too low or too high, too strict or too remiss, according to the scheme newly adopted: they are first disregarded, and at length considered as enemies, because they persist in the truth, and refuse to suit themselves to the new taste of their hearers. Thus error, once admitted, makes an alarming progress, and no power but that of God can stop it. Hence proceed divisions, subdivisions, distinctions, refinements, bitterness, strife,* envyings, and by degrees enthusiasm, in the worst sense of the word; an evil to be dreaded and guarded against no less earnestly than the beginning of a fire or a pestilence. Such trying circumstances will demonstrate who are indeed upon the right foundation; for others, having once begun to depart from the truth, grow worse and

* That bitterness and strife were too frequent in the primitive churches, appears from James, iii. 14.; Gal. v. 15. and other texts. Our Lord's admonition, Matt. vii. 3—5. has always been too little regarded; and few are yet sufficiently convinced of the folly and absurdity of pointing out, and in an angry spirit condemning, the mistakes and faults of others, while we indulge greater in ourselves. Reformation (like modern charity) should begin at home.

worse, deceiving and being deceived; and many who are built upon the rock, and therefore cannot be totally or finally drawn away, yet suffer unspeakable loss; the "wood, hay, and stubble,"* the unadvised additions they have admitted to the Scriptural truths they once received, are burnt up in the time of temptation; they lose much of their comfort and stability, and have, in a manner, all to begin again. The world, that knows not the weakness of man, or the power and devices of Satan, laughs at those things, and expects to see them issue in a universal confusion like that of Babel. In the same light, it is most probable, the Heathens beheld and derided the primitive Christians, for they likewise had their shaking and sifting times; many amongst them, who seemed to begin in the Spirit, were stopped short in their course by the arts of false teachers, to their great hinderance, and some to their final overthrow.

St. Paul addresses no one church in terms of greater tenderness and approbation than the Thessalonians. He commends their work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope, in our Lord Jesus, and mentions them as a pattern to the other churches in Macedonia and Greece. Yet even among these he understood there were "some "who walked disorderly, and were busy-bodies, "not working at all;" he strongly disapproved their conduct, declaring, that "if any would not "work, neither should he eat."† When persons are newly awakened to a concern for their souls, and deeply impressed with the importance of eternity, it is no wonder (considering the animal frame), if their attention is so engaged and engrossed for a season, that they cannot attend to

* 1 Cor. iii. 10—15. † 2 Thess. iii. 10, 11.

the affairs of common life with their usual alacrity and freedom.* If their concern is of a right kind, they are gradually brought to peace and hope in believing. They recover their spirits; and their civil callings being now sanctified by a desire to glorify God in them, their diligence is not less, but frequently greater, than before; for now they act not to please men, or to please themselves, but what they do, they do heartily as to the Lord. However, amongst a number of people, natural temper, indiscretion, or inadvertence, may cause some to deviate from the general rule: and though we cannot justify any who are remiss in the discharge of the relative duties of society, we may justify the doctrines and principles they acknowledge from the charge of leading them into this mistake, unless it can be proved that St. Paul's preaching was justly chargeable with the same fault.

But these are small things compared to what he says in another place. He complains to the Philippians in this affecting language†—"Many walk "(not some only, but many), of whom I have told "you often, and now tell you, even weeping, that

* See James, iv. 9. The word Κατηφεια, rendered *heaviness*, answers nearest to *dejection*, the derivation importing a downcast countenance; and it expresses that kind of sorrow which sinks the spirits, and fixes the eyes upon the earth. Something of this is usually discernible when a real conviction of sin takes place in the heart. The inspired apostle recommends this temper and demeanour, as most suitable to the case of sinners who are destitute of faith and love, and cannot therefore rejoice upon good grounds; and yet, when any person begins to be impressed in this manner, and to see the propriety of the apostle's advice, it frequently happens that all who know him, both friends and enemies, will agree to pronounce him disordered in his senses. So different, so opposite, are the Spirit of God and the spirit of the world!

† Phil. iii. 18, 19.

"they are enemies of the cross of Christ; whose "end is destruction, whose God is their belly, who "mind earthly things." St. Paul had occasion to express himself thus, and that again and again, even in the golden days of primitive Christianity.* Could their worst enemies have given them a worse character? Can even malice itself desire to fix a harsher imputation upon any denomination of people now subsisting? Yet these are the words of truth and soberness; the words of an inspired apostle; the words, not of resentment, but grief. He spoke of it weeping; he would willingly have hoped better things; but he knew what tempers and practices were inconsistent with a sincere acceptance of the Gospel; and, unless he would shut his eyes and stop his ears, he could not but be sensible that many, who were reputed Christians, dishonoured the name of Christianity, and caused the ways of truth to be evil spoken of. Now what is the consequence? Shall the apostle bear the blame† of the evils and abominations he lamented? for if he had not preached, these evils would not have appeared under the Christian name. Shall the wickedness of his pretended fol-

* What disagreeable things the apostle was apprehensive of meeting, when he should revisit Corinth, we may learn from 2 Cor. xii. 20, 21.

† The apostle knew that some did or would presume to infer a liberty to sin from the doctrine which he preached, Rom. vi. 1.; yet he would not suppress or disguise the truths of God to prevent such a poor disingenuous perversion. He knew likewise that no one, who had tasted that the Lord is gracious, can either form such a conclusion himself, or listen to it if proposed by others; therefore he thought it unnecessary to refute it at large. "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid!" This is a sufficient answer. This absurd blasphemy exposes and confutes itself; the terms are inconsistent, impossible, and contradictory in the highest degree.

preach Christ crucified, Christ the end of the law for righteousness, and the power of God for sanctification, to every one that believeth. We preach salvation by grace through faith in his blood, and we are sure that they who receive this doctrine unfeignedly, will, by their lives and conversations, demonstrate it to be a doctrine according to godliness. They are not indeed delivered from infirmities, they are liable to mistakes and indiscretions, and see more amiss in themselves than their worst enemies can charge them with. But sin is their burden, they sigh to be delivered from it, and they expect a complete redemption. We cannot, indeed, say so much for all who outwardly avow a belief of this doctrine: there are pretenders, who, while they profess to believe in God, in works deny him: but it has been so from the beginning. The miscarriages of such persons are charged indiscriminately upon the societies among whom they are mixed, and upon the truths which they seem to approve; but there is a righteous God, who in due time will vindicate his own Gospel and his own people from all aspersions. St. Paul observed such things in his day, and he spoke of them likewise, but he spoke of them *weeping*. The true state of the mind may be determined from the temper with which the miscarriages of professors are observed. The profane expatiate on them with delight, the self-righteous with disdain; but they who know themselves and love the Lord, cannot speak of them without the sincerest emotions of grief. They are concerned for the honour of the Gospel, which is defamed under this pretence; they are grieved for the unhappy and dangerous state of those by whom such offences come; and they fear for themselves lest the enemy should gain an advantage over them

likewise, for they know they have no strength nor goodness of their own. Therefore, avoiding unnecessary reflections on others, they endeavour to maintain a watchful jealousy over themselves, and to fix their hearts and hopes upon Christ Jesus their Lord; who, they are persuaded, is able to keep them from falling, to save them to the uttermost, and at length to present them faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.

CHAPTER IV.

Of the Heresies propagated by false Teachers in the Apostles' Days.

The parables in the thirteenth chapter of St. Matthew are prophetical of the reception and event of the Gospel in succeeding ages. In this view our Lord himself has explained them. Wherever it is preached, the hearers may be classed according to the distribution in the parable of the sower. Some hear without understanding or reflection. In some it excites a hasty emotion in the natural affections, and produces an observable and sudden change in their conduct, resembling the effects of a real conversion to God; but the truth not being rooted in the heart, nor the soul united to Christ by a living faith, these hopeful appearances are, sooner or later, blasted and come to nothing. Others are really convinced in their judgement of the truth and importance of what they hear; but their hearts cleave to the dust, and the love of this world, the care of what they have, the desire of what they have not, the calls of business, or the solicitations of pleasure,

choke the word which they seem to receive, so that it brings forth no fruit to perfection. A part, however (usually the smallest part), who are compared to the good ground, are disposed and enabled, by divine grace, to receive it thankfully, as life from the dead, and, though they meet with many difficulties, and like the corn upon the ground, pass through a succession of trying and changing seasons, yet, having the love, promise, and power of God engaged on their behalf, in defiance of frosts, and blasts, and storms, they are brought to maturity, and when fully ripe, are safely gathered into his garner.* This is an epitome of the ecclesiastical history of every nation, and of every parish, to which this word of salvation is sent.

But the parable of the tares † teaches us farther to expect, that besides the general influence which Satan, as the god of this world, will exert to blind the eyes of mankind, lest the light of the glorious Gospel should shine upon them,‡ he will take occasion, from the knowledge of the truth, to insinuate a variety of errors. His first attempts in this way are often so specious and unsuspected, that they are compared to a man's sowing seed by stealth and in the night, but, as the corn grew, a large crop of tares springing up with it, demonstrated that an enemy had been there. This, in fact, has been universally the case, in every country and age where the Gospel has been received; and we may remark, that the sowing the good seed was the occasion of the tares being cast into the same ground. When a people are involved in gross darkness and ignorance, sleeping in a false peace, and buried in the pleasures and

* Matt. iii. 12. † Matt. xiii. 24—30. ‡ 2 Cor. iv. 4.

pursuits of the world, they have neither leisure nor inclination to invent or attend to novelties in religion. Each one is satisfied with that form (if even the form of godliness is retained) which he has received from his parents, and neither pretends nor desires to be wiser than those who went before him. But when the truth has shone forth, and been received, and seems to bid fair for further success, Satan employs all his power and subtilty either to suppress or counterfeit it, or both. Much has been done in the former way: he has prevailed so far as to enkindle the fiercest animosities against the nearest relatives, and persuaded men that they might do acceptable service to God by punishing his faithful servants with torture, fire, and sword.* And no less industrious and successful has he been in practising upon the passions and prejudices of mankind to admit and propagate, instead of the Gospel of Christ, and under that name, an endless diversity of opinions, utterly incompatible with it. Of these, some are ingenious and artful, adapted to gratify the pride of those who are wise in their own conceits; others more gross and extravagant, suited to inflame the imaginations, or to gratify the appetites of such persons as have not a turn for speculation and refinement.

As these appearances have always accompanied the Gospel, so they have always been a stumbling-block and offence to the world, and have furnished those who hated the light with a pretext for rejecting it; and the doctrines of truth have been charged as the source and cause of those errors, which have only sprung from their abuse and perversion. When popery, for a series of ages, detained mankind in darkness and bondage, and deprived them of the knowledge of the holy Scrip-

* John, xvi. 2.

tures, the tide of error ran uniformly in one great channel; when dead works were substituted in the place of living faith, and the worship and trust, which is due only to Jesus the great Mediator, was blasphemously directed to subordinate intercessors, to angels, and to saints, whether real or pretended; when forgiveness of sin was expected, not by the blood of Christ, but by penances, pilgrimages, masses, and human absolutions, by the repetition of many prayers, or the payment of sums of money: while things continued thus, the world was generally in that state of stupidity and blind security which is miscalled religious peace and uniformity; and the controversies of the times were chiefly confined to those points which immediately affected the power, wealth, or pre-eminence of the several religious orders by whom the people were implicitly led. Some differences of opinion were indeed known; but the charge of heresy and dangerous innovations was seldom so much as pretended against any, but the few who refused to wear the mark of the beast upon their right hands and foreheads, and who, by the mercy of God, retained and professed the main truths of Christianity in some degree of power and purity. But when it pleased God to revive the knowledge of the Gospel, by the ministry of Luther and his associates, and many were turned from darkness to light, the enemy of mankind presently changed his methods, and, by his influence, the sowing of the good seed was followed by tares in abundance. In the course of a few years the glory of the Reformation was darkened, and its progress obstructed, by the enthusiasm and infatuation of men, who, under a pretence of improving upon Luther's plan, propagated the wildest, most extrava-

gant and blasphemous opinions, and perpetrated, under the mask of religion, such acts of cruelty, villany, and licentiousness, as have been seldom heard of in the world. The Papists beheld these excesses with pleasure. Many of them could not but know that Luther and the heads of the Reformation did all that could be expected from them, to show the folly and iniquity of such proceedings; but, against the light of truth and fact, they laboured to persuade the world that these were the necessary consequences of Luther's doctrine, and that no better issue could be justly hoped for when men presumed to depart from the authorized standards of popes and councils, and to read and examine the Scripture for themselves.

This religious madness was, however, of no long duration. The people who held tenets inconsistent with the peace of society, were deservedly treated as rebels and incendiaries by the governing powers; the ringleaders were punished, and the multitudes dispersed; their most obnoxious errors were gradually abandoned, and are now in a manner forgot. After the peace of Passau, the Reformation acquired an establishment in Germany and other places; and since that time, error has assumed a milder form, and has been supported by softer methods, and more respectable names.

In our own country the same spirit of enthusiasm and disorder has appeared at different times (though it has been restrained, by the providence of God, from proceeding to the same extremities), and has been most notorious, when, or soon after, the power of Gospel truth has been most eminently revived; for, as I have already observed, when religion is upon the decline, and only so much of a profession retained as is consistent with the love of the present world, and a conformity

to the maxims and practices of the many, we seldom hear of any errors prevailing, but such as will find a favourable toleration, and may be avowed without exciting very strong and general expressions of contempt and ill-will against those who maintain them. But whenever real religion, as a life of faith in the Son of God, is set forth upon the principles of Scripture, and by the operation of the Holy Spirit witnesses are raised up, who, by their conduct, demonstrate that they are crucified with Christ, to the law, to sin, and to the world, then is the time for Satan to discredit this work, by imposing a variety of false views and appearances upon the minds of the ignorant and unwary; and he is seldom at a loss for fit instruments to promote his designs. Since the late revival of the Reformation-doctrines amongst us, we have, perhaps, fewer things of this kind to apologize for than have been observable on any similar occasion: and the best apology we can offer for what has been really blameable, is, to show that it was even thus in the apostles' days; and that if any arguments taken from these blemishes are conclusive against what some choose to call the novel doctrines now, they would with equal reason, conclude against the validity of the New Testament.

And, not to confine myself to such things as the world is most prone to except against, I shall endeavour to show that the seeds of all errors and heresies, the fashionable, as well as those which are more generally despised, were sown in the first age, and appeared so early as to give occasion for the apostles' censures against them. I do not mean by this to parallel every name and every singularity that a subtle head or a warm imagination may have started; but to assign, in general, the principles to which all these delusions may be

reduced, the sources to which these inebriating and dangerous streams may be traced; for, indeed, the operations of the human mind seem to be much more simple and limited than we are ordinarily aware. As there can be no new truths, though every truth appears new to us which we have not known before, so it is probable that there can be now no new errors; at least it is certain that a competent knowledge of antiquity, or even a careful perusal of the apostles' writings, will furnish sufficient evidence, that some modern authors and teachers, are, by no means, the inventors of the ingenious schemes they have presented to the public. Truth, like the sun, maintains a constant course; every thing would stagnate and die if we were deprived of it for a single day. But errors are like comets, which, though too eccentric to be subject exactly to our computations, yet have their periods of approach and recess; and some of them have appeared and been admired, have been withdrawn and forgot, over and over again,

Error, in the simplest form, is a misapprehension of the truth. Some part of the Gospel must be known before any erroneous conceptions of it can take place. Thus we read, * that Simon Magus was struck with Philip's preaching, and the effects which attended it. He was so far impressed, that, it is said, he believed, that is, he made a profession of faith; he was convinced there was something extraordinary in the doctrine, but he understood it not: and the event showed he had no part nor lot in the matter. He is thought by the ancients to have been the founder of that capital sect which is known in general by the name of the Gnostics, and which, like a

* Acts, viii. 9—22.

gangrene, spread far and wide in various branches and subdivisions, each successive head refining upon the system of the preceding. In Sir Peter King's History of the Apostles' Creed, and Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History, the English reader may see the substance of the figments which these unhappy men, wise in their own conceit, vented under the name of the Christian religion.

The doctrine of Jesus Christ, and of him crucified, which St. Paul preached, and in which he gloried, is the pillar and ground of truth, the rock upon which the church is built, and against which the gates of hell shall never prevail.* Mistakes in this point are fundamental, dangerous, and, if persisted in, destructive; for, as such a knowledge of God as is connected with his favour and communion is eternal life, so none can come to the Father but by the Son,† nor can any know him but those to whom the Son will reveal him.‡ On this account Satan's great endeavour (and on his success herein the strength of his kingdom depends), is to darken and pervert the minds of men, lest they should acknowledge and understand what the Scripture declares of his person, characters, and offices, as well knowing, that if these are set aside, whatever else is left of religion will be utterly unavailing. Jesus Christ is revealed in the Scripture, and was preached by his first disciples, as God manifest in the flesh, a divine person in the human nature; who, by submitting to ignominy, pain, and death, made a full and proper atonement for sin, and wrought out an everlasting righteousness in favour of all who should believe in his name; and he is set forth in that nature, in which

* 1 Cor. ii. 2.; Gal. vi. 14.; 1 Tim. iii. 15.; Matt. xvi. 18.
† John, xvii. 3.; xiv. 6. ‡ Matt. xi. 27.

he suffered, as the object of our supreme love, trust, and adoration. Other important doctrines, largely insisted on in the word of God, such as the demerit of sin, the obnoxiousness of sinners to punishment, and the misery and incapacity of man in his fallen state, are closely connected with this, and cannot be satisfactorily explained without it. The necessary method of our recovery exhibits the most striking view of the ruin in which sin has involved us, and is the only adequate standard whereby to estimate the unspeakable love of God manifested in our redemption. On the other hand, a knowledge of the true state of mankind, in consequence of the fall, is necessary to obviate the prejudices of our minds against a procedure which, though in itself the triumph of divine wisdom, is, in many respects, contradictory to our natural (and therefore false) notions of the fitness of things. St. Paul declares,* "that the "natural man receiveth not the things of the "Spirit of God, neither can he discern them;" and in another place,† "that no man can say," that is sincerely and upon solid conviction, "that "Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." To worship him who had been hanged upon a cross, and to expect eternal happiness from his death, was to the Jews a stumbling-block; it offended their notions of the unity of the Godhead, and opposed their high esteem of their own righteousness; and to the Greeks or Heathens it appeared the greatest folly and absurdity imaginable. For these reasons the Gospel was rejected by multitudes as soon as proposed, and those who preached it were accounted babblers and madmen; not because they were at a loss for propriety of expres-

* 1 Cor. ii. 14. † 1 Cor. xii. 3.

sion, or discovered any thing ridiculous in their conduct, but because they enforced tenets which were adjudged inconsistent with the common sense of mankind.

But, notwithstanding these prejudices, the energy of their preaching, and the miraculous powers with which it was accompanied, made an impression upon many persons, so far as to induce them to profess the name of Jesus, though they were not spiritually enlightened into the mysteries of his religion, nor their hearts thoroughly subdued to the obedience of the faith. There are other points, within the compass of the Gospel ministry, more adapted to affect the minds of men in their natural state. Few are so hardened but they have a conscience of sin, some fears with respect to its consequences, and a pre-intimation of immortality. Such are capable of being greatly affected and moved, by a pathetic declaration of the terrors of the Lord, the solemnities of a future judgement, the joys of heaven, or the torments of hell. We cannot doubt that these topics, when insisted on with that strength of argument, and warmth of spirit of which the apostles were capable, would engage the attention of many who were not partakers of that divine light by which alone the whole scheme of truth, in its harmony and beauty, can be perceived. The seed sown upon the rock sprang up immediately; the quickness of its growth, and the suddenness of its decay, proceeding from the same cause, a want of depth in the soil. Not a few of these hasty believers presently renounced the faith altogether; and others, who went not so far as to disown the name, endeavoured to accommodate the doctrine to their prepossessions, and to explain or reject what they could not understand in such a manner as to form

a system upon the whole agreeable to their own wills. Men of corrupt and prejudiced minds thus tampered with the truth, and their inventions, when made known, were adopted by others of the same cast of thought. As they were differently inclined, they directed their inquiries to different points, and each found partisans and adherents in their respective ways. Thus errors, and, in consequence, sects and divisions, were multiplied; for when men depart from the unerring guidance of God's word, there is no end of their imaginations; one singularity produces another, and every new leader is stimulated to carry his discoveries farther than those who have gone before him. Farther, as human nature is universally the same, we may judge, from what we have seen, that there always have been persons inclined to join in a religious profession, from the unworthy motives of worldly interest, and a desire to stand fair with their fellow-creatures. Temptations to this were not so strong indeed at first, nor so general as they have often been since; yet the force of friendship, relation (and when Christianity had been of some years' standing), education, custom, and human authority, is very considerable. Nor is even persecution a a sufficient bar against hypocrites and intruders. They who suffer for the Gospel, though despised by the world, are highly esteemed and considered by their own side: it procures them an attention which they would not have otherwise obtained: it may give them an importance in their own eyes, furnish them with something to talk of, and make them talked of by others. There are people who, for the sake of these advantages, will, for a season, venture upon many hardships; though, when the trial comes very close, they will not endure to the end. In a word, there is no reason

to doubt but that amongst the numbers who professed the Gospel at first, there would be found the same variety of tempers, circumstances, views, and motives, as have ordinarily appeared amongst a great number of people, suddenly formed in any other period of time; and the apostles' writings prove that it was really so. From these general principles we may easily account for the early introduction and increase of errors and heresies, and that they should be in a manner the same as have sprung with, or followed, succeeding revivals of the truth. Nor is it just cause of surprise, if sincere Christians have been, in some instances, entangled in the prevailing errors of the times. Designing no harm themselves, they suspect none; and are therefore liable to be imposed on by those who lie in wait to deceive.*

When Christianity first appeared, the Heathen wisdom, known by the name of philosophy, was in the highest repute. It had two principal branches, the Grecian and the Eastern. The former admitted (at least did not condemn) a multiplicity and subordination of deities; amongst whom, as agents and mediators between their supreme Jupiter and mortals, the care and concerns of mankind were subdivided; to each of which homage and sacrifices were due. Their mythology, or the pretended history of their divinities, was puerile and absurd; and many of their religious rites inconsistent with the practice of public decorum and good morals. Some of the philosophers endeavoured to guard against the worst abuses, and to form a system of religion and morality, in which they seem to have proceeded as far as could be expected from men who were totally ignorant of the true God, and of their own state. Some truths they were acquainted

* Ephes. iv. 14.

with; truths in theory, but utterly impracticable upon any principles but those of revelation. Amongst a vast number of opinions concerning the chief good of man, a few held, that man's honour and happiness must consist in conformity to and communion with God; but how to attain these desirable ends, they were entirely ignorant.

The Eastern philosophy was solemn and mysterious; not less fabulous than the other, but the fables were of a graver cast. It seemed to mourn under the sense of moral evil, and laboured in vain to account for its entrance. Its precepts were gloomy and severe, and a perfect course of bodily mortification was recommended, as the great expedient to purify the soul from all its defilements, and to re-unite it, by degrees, to its great Author.

St. Paul, in several passages,* cautions the Christians against corrupting the simplicity of their faith, by admitting the reasonings and inventions of vain men. In some places † he seems to speak more directly of the Gnostics, whose heresies were little more than the fables of the Eastern philosophy in a new dress, with an acknowledgement of Jesus Christ as an extraordinary person, yet so as utterly to exclude and deny all the important truths revealed in Scripture concerning him. They dignified their scheme with the name of Gnosis, or science; but it was falsely so called, and stood in direct opposition to the Gospel. On other occasions ‡ he appears to have had the Grecian philosophy chiefly in view. But, notwithstanding his admonitions, it was not long before the errors of philosophy had an ill influence

* Coloss. ii. 8.; 1 Tim. vi. 20. † 1 Tim. i. 4.; Tit. iii. 9.
‡ Rom. i. 21—23.; 1 Cor. i. 20—23.

upon the professors of the Christian faith; and even several of the fathers darkened the glory of the truth, by endeavouring to accommodate it to the taste and genius of that Heathen wisdom which they had before admired, and still thought might be useful to embellish and recommend the Gospel.

But, to confine myself to the apostles' times, it is plain, from the epistles of St. Paul, John, Jude, and Peter,* that many false prophets and teachers had, in their days, crept in, who propagated damnable heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, turning the grace of God into licentiousness, speaking great swelling words of vanity, boasting themselves of freedom while they in were bondage to their own lusts. And, in the epistle to the church of Ephesus,† our Lord himself mentions a sect who bore the name of Nicolaitans, and expresses his disapprobation of them in those awful terms, "Whom I also hate." The peculiar tenets of the people condemned in these passages of Scripture are not expressly mentioned; but from these sources were, most probably, derived the sects which, in the second century, were known by the names of their several leaders Cerinthus, Saturninus, Cerdo, Marcion, Basilides, Valentinus, and others; who all building upon the common foundation of the Eastern philosophy, or Gnosis, superadded their own peculiarities, and were differently, though equally, remote from the truth. The one thing in which they all agreed was, in perverting and opposing the Scripture-doctrine concerning the person of Christ. On this point their opinions were as discordant as absurd. Some

* Titus, i. 10.; 1 John, iv. 1.; 2 Pet. ii. 18, 19.; Jude, 4.
† Rev. ii. 6.

denied that Christ was come in the flesh; they pretended that Christ was sent from heaven by the Supreme God, and united himself to Jesus, the son of Joseph and Mary, at his baptism; and that, when the Jews apprehended the man Jesus, and nailed him to the cross, Christ returned to heaven, and left him to suffer by himself. Others ascribed a heavenly derivation to his body, affirming that it passed through the Virgin Mary without any participation of her substance; while others asserted that he had no substantial flesh, but that his body was a mere phantom, or apparition, which was neither really born, nor did nor could truly suffer. Again, there were others who held the reality of his human nature, yet maintained that Christ did not suffer at all; but that Simon of Cyrene (the bearer of his cross), being taken by th eJews for him, was crucified in his stead, while he stood by and laughed at their mistake. A brief recital of these extravagances is sufficient for my present purpose. For a more particular account, I refer the reader to Sir Peter King's History of the Creed, already mentioned. Many passages in the apostles' writings are directed against these dangerous errors; for they strike at the root of the faith and hope of the Gospel, and are subversive of the whole tenour both of the Old and New Testament. It was believed by the ancients, that St. John wrote his Gospel with some view to these heresies; and it is certain that in his first Epistle, where (putting the disciples upon their guard against the many false prophets who were gone out into the world) he observes that the common point, in which all their divers opinions agreed, was a denial that Jesus Christ was come in the flesh;* he reminds them that, as they had

* 1 John, ii. 22.; iv. 3.

heard antichrist must come, even so now there were many antichrists, and that the name was applicable to all who denied that Jesus is the Christ. He admits that these false teachers went out from amongst themselves, that is, they had borne the Christian name; but he refers to the doctrines they taught, as a sufficient proof that they had never been of the number of true Christians; "for if they had been of us, no doubt they "would have continued with us."* If opinions, equally wild and extravagant, were at this time maintained and propagated by persons who, for a season, had been warm for truth and reformation, we are not afraid that they would prejudice our cause with any who will allow due weight to the reasoning of St. John; for if they had been really of us once, they would have still continued with us.

But the truth is, the teachers in our time whose leading tenets most nearly symbolize with these ancient heresies, are not charged, or even suspected, of having had any attachment to the doctrines wich I am concerned to vindicate; nor is an apology expected from them, for they give but little offence. Since the fabulous disguise under which the Gnostics of old veiled their opinions has been laid aside, their opposition to the deity and atonement of Christ has been adopted by so many who are applauded for ingenuity, fine reasoning, and great learning, that it bids fair to be the fashionable divinity of the age; and though the sufferings of Jesus are not denied, yet their proper causes and ends are openly exploded, and the attempt has often proved an easy path to acceptance, wealth, and dignity.

* 1 John, ii. 19.

The attachment of the Jewish converts to the law of Moses was another source of error, which occasioned daily disputes in the churches, and gave rise, in the issue, to dangerous heresies, subversive of the true faith. Even those of them, who had sincerely received the Gospel, could not easily be persuaded that a law, given to Moses by God himself, with so much solemnity, from mount Sinai, was to be entirely abrogated, and that their obligation to it was, *ipso facto*, vacated the moment they believed in Jesus; who, by his obedience unto death, had accomplished all its types and ceremonies, and wrought out for his people an everlasting righteousness commensurate to its utmost requirements. The apostles, who, after the pattern of their Lord, were gentle and tender to the weak of the flock, bore with their infirmities,* and allowed them to retain a distinction of meats and days, and other observances, provided they did not consider these things in such a point of view, as to interfere with God's appointed method of justification by faith in his Son. But the matter was carried much farther; for no sooner was there a church formed at Antioch, than they were troubled with perverse teachers, who told them "that, except they were "circumcised and kept the law of Moses, they "could not be saved. † The Galatians were greatly hurt by teachers of this sort; ‡ and, as the Jews were dispersed through all the provinces, the peace of the church was more or less affected by their attempts to enforce the observance of the law, in almost every place, till after the Epistle to the Hebrews was received, and obedience to the Levitical law rendered impracticable by the de-

* Rom. xiv. 2—6. † Acts, xv. 1. ‡ Gal. v. 4.

struction of Jerusalem and the temple.* From that period, it is probable, the distinction of Jew and Gentile believers ceased, and both parties were firmly incorporated into one body; but a great number of the zealots for the law separated themselves, and were known in the following age by the name of Ebionites, adopting for their rule a mixture of law and Gospel so very different from the Gospel St. Paul preached, that they openly expressed an abhorrence both of his person and writings.

We have an account likewise of some pretended teachers, who opposed the important doctrine of the Resurrection. Some expressly maintained that there was no resurection;† whom St. Paul confutes at large in his first Epistle to the Corinthians. Others affirmed the resurrection is passed already.‡ Perhaps they pretended that a moral change was designed by the metaphorical expression of a resurrection; the philosophers had used the word in this sense; and this would be sufficient to gain it admittance with some, who would willingly reconcile their profession to the wisdom of the world. In either way the very foundations of hope were removed. If this point is denied, the whole system of Christian doctrine falls to the ground, and that dreadful train of consequences must be admitted, which the apostle enumerates:§ "If there be no resurrection of the dead, then is "Christ not risen, then is our preaching vain and "your faith also vain, ye are yet in your sins; "then they also who are fallen asleep in Christ "are perished." Since the fertile *resurrection* of ancient mistakes, which is the sin and scandal of the present age, we have been gravely told, that

* Col. ii. 16.; Tit. i. 10.; Phil. iii. 2.; 1 Tim. i. 7.
† 1 Cor. xv. 12. ‡ 2 Tim. ii. 18. § 1 Cor. xv. 14. 18.

the word signifies no more than the soul's awaking from the long sleep into which they supose the period we call Death will plunge it; and that the body has no share in the revival, but dies without hope. But we may thank God for the Scripture, which brings comfort where philosophy gives up the cause as desperate. Faith in Christ is so closely connected with the doctrine of a resurrection, that it is common with those who oppose the former, to use all their address to explain the latter quite away; and whether they say it is past already, or it will never come, their motives, their design, and their manner of reasoning, are the same.

That there were persons who abused the doctrines of grace, as an encouragement to continue in the practice of sin, may be inferred from the Epistle of St. James, and several passages of the other apostles. Such, in our modern phrase, are styled Antinomians; a name, it must be confessed, of very indeterminate application: it is an epithet which many would fix indiscriminately upon all who preach a free salvation by faith in the blood of Jesus. "If it is all of grace, and we can do "nothing of ourselves, if it is not of him that "willeth nor of him that runneth, but of God that "showeth mercy; then we may live as we please, "endeavours are useless, and obedience unneces-"sary."* These are the inferences which the unenlightened heart charges as unavoidable consequences from the Gospel doctrine; and from hence we obtain a corroborating proof, that we do not mistake St. Paul's sense, or preach a Gospel different from his, because he foresaw that the same objections would seem to lie against† himself;

* Rom. xi. 6.; 2 Cor. iii. 5.; Rom. ix. 16.

† Rom. iii. 7.; ix. 19.

and he guards and protests against such a perversion, * "Shall we continue in sin that grace may "abound? God forbid!" It seems to have been upon this account that he was slandered, and by some affirmed to have taught, "Let us do evil, "that good may come," †—that is, in modern language (and such things are not spoken in corners amongst us), "If any man would be a proper "subject of what they call Grace, let him become "still more vile, and plunge into the most atro- "cious wickedness, for the greater the sinner the "better qualified for mercy." We are content to be reproached (as St. Paul was in his time) for the truth's sake; and we would be chiefly concerned for the unhappy scoffers, who, unless God is pleased to give them repentance unto life, will one day wish they had been idiots or lunatics, rather than have vented their malicious wit against the grace and Gospel of the Lord Christ. But it must be allowed we have seen Antinomians in the worst sense of the word, men who have pleaded for sin, and, while they have laid claim to faith, have renounced and blasphemed that holiness without which no man shall see the Lord. We cannot wonder that even candid and well-meaning persons have been greatly prejudiced, and discouraged in their inquiries after truth, by the presumption and wickedness of such pretended Christians. But no period of the church, in which the Gospel doctrine was known and preached, has been free from offences of this sort. It was so in the apostles' days. "There were then many unruly and "vain talkers and deceivers, who subverted whole "houses, teaching things which they ought not; ‡ "who professed that they knew God, but in works

* Rom. vi. 1. † Rom. iii. 8. ‡ Tit. i. 10, 11.

"denied him, being abominable and disobedient, "and to every good work reprobate;"* "who "pretended to faith, but were destitute of those "fruits which true faith always produces."† These are described "as clouds without water, carried "about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, "twice dead, plucked up by the roots; raging "waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; "wandering stars, to whom is reserved the black- "ness of darkness for ever:"‡ "sporting them- "selves with their own deceivings, and beguiling "unstable souls."§ In opposition to such de- ceivers it is written, "If we say that we have "fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we "lie, and do not the truth."‖ "He that saith, I "know him, and keepeth not his commandments, "is a liar, and the truth is not in him;"¶ for "every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth "himself, even as he is pure."** "The founda- "tion of God standeth sure, having this seal. "The Lord knoweth them that are his; and let "every one that nameth the name of Christ depart "from iniquity."††

St. Paul, writing to the Thessalonians concern- ing the "man of sin,"‡‡ who was to be fully re- vealed in the following ages, reminds them, that the mystery of iniquity, though at that time re- strained from a full manifestation, did already work; teaching us, that the seeds of that grand apostasy, which at length overspread the whole professing church, were sown, and springing up, at the time of his writing. And he mentions several particulars in his Epistle to the Colossians,§§ such

* Tit. i. 16. † James, ii. 14. ‡ Jude, 12, 13.
§ 2 Pet. ii. 13, 14. ‖ 1 John, i. 6. ¶ 1 John, ii. 4.
** 1 John, iii. 3. †† 2 Tim. ii. 19. ‡‡ 2 Thess. ii. 3—10.
§§ Col. ii. 18—23.

as a voluntary or self-devised humility, in worshipping angels as mediators or intercessors, a dogmatic inhibition of things which God had left free, and a specious scheme of will-worship and mortification, which, under pretence of self-denial, did really gratify pride, vanity, and self-righteousness. The progress of our history will show what a harvest of dreadful and wide-spreading evils were produced from these principles, until at length the Gospel of Christ was wholly obscured, and the lives and consciences of men were given up to the power of antichrist, who, as god, insolently sat down in the temple of God, and exalted himself above all laws, human and divine. It is sufficient to my purpose, at present, to take notice, that the beginnings of that spiritual infatuation, which so long detained the world in chains, and darkness, and slavery, under the tyranny of the church of Rome, were observable in St. Paul's time, and therefore deserve a place in the list of those pestilent heresies by which the enemy of souls attempted to defile the faith, and disturb the peace, of the primitive church.

Many other things are alluded to, which, for want of authentic records of the first century, we cannot with certainty explain. Besides the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, already mentioned, we read of the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but of the Synagogue of Satan,* of them who held the doctrine of Balaam, and of the woman Jezebel, who called herself a prophetess.† These were certainly heretics, for our Lord severely rebukes the churches for not opposing them to the utmost; and, as he gives them different names, they probably differed from

* Rev. iii. 9. † Rev. ii. 14. 20.

each other, though their ultimate tendency was the same, to pervert the faith of the hearers, and to introduce licentiousness of practice. The Gospel truth is a doctrine according to godliness, and has a sanctifying influence; for the grace of God teaches all who are partakers of it, to forsake all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present world.* But errors and heresies, in whatever degree they prevail, have a poisonous effect upon those who admit them. Some are calculated to set aside the whole frame of obedience which we owe to our God and Saviour, and the most refined and plausible will deliver the soul into the power of some easy, besetting, and beloved sin, and furnish arms and arguments to maintain it. And this explains what would otherwise seem a very strange phenomenon. When the truth is proposed with the greatest clearness and the greatest advantages, its votaries, at all times, and in all places, have been but few; but whoever will stand up on the side of error, however wild and absurd his opinions and conduct may be, will hardly fail of obtaining adherents. It is because error will tolerate those lusts and follies which truth will not endure; and, in the present state of human depravity, more people will be found willing to give up their understandings, than to part with their sins.

We may likewise collect from several texts in the Epistles, that there were those of old who denied what the Scripture teaches concerning the depravity of human nature, the real guilt of sin,† the influences of the Holy Spirit,‡ and the terrors of a future judgement:§

* Tit. ii. 11, 12.
† 1 John, i. 8. 10.
‡ Jude, 19.
§ 2 Pet. iii. 9.

though we cannot be sure that these doctrines were opposed so openly and so strenuously as they are in our own days. But I have enumerated enough to answer my purpose, by way of apology for the evangelical doctrine, the modern opposers of the last-mentioned points not being under any suspicion or charge of what is called enthusiasm; and all who are despised or persecuted for resting the hope of their salvation solely upon the mediation of Jesus and his obedience unto death, even the death of the cross, are known to acknowledge them as essential truths; indeed, they stand inseparably connected with what they believe of his person, offices, power, and grace. A conscience impressed with the majesty, holiness, and justice of the great God, and that trembles at the denunciations of his law against every transgression, dares not hope for peace without the discovery of an adequate atonement for sin, nor venture its eternal concerns upon the interposition of a creature. To such a one, all that is revealed of the love and sufferings of Jesus, would afford no solid ground of consolation, if the infinite dignity of his divine nature, and his voluntary substitution in the place and on the behalf of sinners, were not revealed with equal clearness; and a conviction of that total insufficiency for every good work* and the prevalence of indwelling sin,† which the Scripture so expressly declares to be the condition of every child of Adam, would plunge an awakened mind into hopeless despair, if it was not relieved by the gracious promise of the infallible Spirit,‡ whose office is to teach, guide, comfort, and seal the children of God unto the day of complete redemption;§ but having

* 2 Cor. iii. 5.
† Rom. vii. 18—24.
‡ John, xiv. 26.; xvi. 7. 13.
§ Ephes. iv. 30.

such a great high priest, who, by his own blood, has entered into the holy place, to appear in the presence of God for us; * and having, in the promise of the Holy Spirit, † a source of succour and comfort answerable to all our ignorance, weakness, necessities, and temptations, we are enabled, in the midst of fightings and fears, ‡ to maintain an humble confidence that we shall not be ashamed before him at his coming, but have boldness in the day of judgement, the great and terrible day of the Lord. § On the other hand, it is no wonder that those who do not acknowledge the Deity of the Saviour (not finding any other basis whereon to rest the validity of an atonement for sin) should embrace every shadow of an argument against its necessity, and be willing to think as highly as possible of their own righteousness and abilities; or, that being thus persuaded that they can please God, without the influence of his Spirt themselves, they should treat all claims to this assistance in others as enthusiasm and folly. Nor can we be surprised that many who reject the Scripture testimony concerning Christ and the Holy Spirit, should use all their address to prove that the soul sinks into sleep and inactivity at death, that the resurrection of the flesh is improbable, and that it is injurious to the goodness of God, to suppose he will inflict eternal punishment for sins committed within the compass of a short life. Such reasonings may be expected from men who presume upon the sufficiency of their own wisdom; who neither expect nor desire divine teaching, and who find a little relief in these sentiments against the fears and forebodings which will sometimes force themselves upon their minds.

* Heb. viii. 1.; ix. 24.; x. 19.
† Rom. viii. 16. 26, 27.
‡ 2 Cor. vii. 5.
§ 1 John, ii. 28.; iv. 17.

It appears, however, from the indisputable evidence of the New Testament, that, in the first age of the church, the enemy sowed the tares of error and heresy in great abundance, and that the figments published in that period, by men who professed some regard to the name of Christ, have not been surpassed, either as to absurdity or wickedness, by any attempts of the same kind, in any age or country since. It is true, the vigilance and authority of the apostles restrained these excesses from rising to that height to which they afterwards attained. But if the people who now object to the variety of names, sects, and sentiments, which have gradually prevailed amongst us within these thirty years past, had lived in the primitive church, they would have had, at least, equal cause for making the like objections. If, upon these accounts, they now think themselves at liberty to reject all parties alike, without examination, as empty pretenders to the truth, purity, and power of religion; there is little doubt but they would have done the same then. The apostles were personally present with the first churches; their writings were appointed to be the rule of succeeding times, and, through the mercy of God, are in our hands. Whoever is sincerely desirous to know the will of God, by attending to these lively oracles, will be enabled to discern the path of truth and peace, through the midst of that maze of opinions wherein so many are bewildered and lost; but whoever is too wise, or too indolent, to search the Scripture humbly and diligently for himself, would have paid as little regard to the authority of the apostles if he could have conversed with them; nay, the advantage is on our side; for, as the Scriptures are held in professed veneration, we run no immediate risk of character or interest

by consulting them, or they may be perused in retirement, unobserved by our nearest friends; whereas the apostles, though highly spoken of amongst us, were accounted, while they lived, the filth and offscouring of all things; they were despised for their poverty and the meanness of their appearance, and detested as bigots and enthusiasts; so that it required some degree of faith and grace not to be ashamed of them.

Let not the reader be offended, if I close this book, as I did the former, with entreating him to reflect on the importance of having right views of the Gospel of Christ, and of the spirit of Christianity. These are topics of universal concern. A believer in Jesus, however obscure, unnoticed, or oppressed in the present life, is happy; he is a child of God, the charge of angels, an heir of glory;* he has meat to eat that the world knows not of; and from the knowledge of his union and relation to his Redeemer, he derives a peace which passes understanding,† and a power suited to every service and circumstance of life.‡ Though weak in himself, he is strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus the Lord,§ upon whom he relies, as his wisdom, righteousness, sanctification; and expects from him, in due time, a complete redemption from every evil.‖ His faith is not merely speculative, like the cold assent we give to a mathematical truth, nor is it the blind impulse of a warm imagination; but it is the effect of an apprehension of the wisdom, power, and love displayed in the redemption of sinners by Jesus Christ; it is a constraining principle, that works by love, purifies the heart, and overcomes the world; it

* Rom. viii. 14. 17. † Phil. iv. 7. ‡ 2 Cor. xii. 9.
§ 2 Tim. ii. 1. ‖ 1 Cor. i. 30.

gives the foretaste and evidence of things invisible to mortal eyes, and, transforming the soul into the resemblance of what it beholds, fills the heart with benevolence, gentleness, and patience, and directs every action to the sublimest ends, the glory of God, and the good of mankind.*

But whatever is styled religion that is not thus pure, thus peaceable, thus operative, or, at least, that does not lead the soul to desire the graces of the Spirit, and to seek them in God's appointed way, by faith in his Son, is unworthy the name. If you have not the Spirit of Christ, you are none of his; † whatever else you may have, you have no interest in the promised blessings of the Gospel; whatever else you can do, you cannot please God. ‡ If you do not count all things loss, and of no value, in comparison of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus the Lord, § you certainly do not understand the word *Gospel* in St. Paul's sense; if you did, you would be of his mind. And are you not in danger of incurring that anathema, which, under the influence of the Spirit of God, he denounces against all who love not the Lord Jesus? ‖ Search the Scriptures, if you really think that in them you have eternal life. ¶ If, indeed, you could prove them to be cunningly devised fables, ** you might neglect them without danger; but, if the Scriptures are true, there is a day coming when God shall judge the world. †† I need not appeal to Scripture to convince you that, whatever your situation in life is, you must leave it, and experience a moment, when the pleasures or honours of this world will

* Gal. v. 6.; Acts, xv. 9.; 1 John, v. 4.; Heb. xi. 1.; 2 Cor. iii. 18.
† Rom. viii. 9. ‡ Heb. xi. 6. § Phil. iii. 8.
‖ 1 Cor. xvi. 22. ¶ John, v. 39. ** 2 Pet. i. 16.
†† Acts. xvii. 31.

afford you no comfort; but, if the Scriptures are true, you must then appear before the judgement-seat of Christ; you must stand either at the right hand or the left.* Important alternative! For to those on the left hand the King will say, "Depart from me ye cursed!"† If hitherto, while you have professed his name, you have had your heart filled with enmity against his doctrine and his people; if you have accounted his wisdom foolishness, and reproached the operations of his Spirit as enthusiasm and madness; it is to be hoped you have done it through ignorance, you knew not what you did;‡ there is then forgiveness with him; as yet he is upon a throne of grace. May the Spirit of God lead you to him before he takes his seat upon the throne of judgement! otherwise you are lost for ever. My heart's desire and prayer to God, for my readers, will be, that not one of them may fall under that awful sentence, "Behold, ye despisers, and wonder and perish; for I work a work in your days, which you shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you."§

* 2 Cor. v. 10. † Matt. xxv. 41.
‡ 1 Tim. i. 13.; Luke, xxiii. 34. § Acts, xiii. 41.

OLNEY HYMNS,

IN THREE BOOKS:

BOOK I.

ON SELECT TEXTS OF SCRIPTURE.

BOOK II.

ON OCCASIONAL SUBJECTS.

BOOK III.

ON THE PROGRESS AND CHANGES OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE.

———————Cantabitis, Arcades, inquit,
Montibus hæc vestris: soli cantare periti
Arcades. O mihi tum quam molliter ossa quiescant,
Vestra meos olim si fistula dicat amores!

VIRGIL. ECL. x. 31.

And they sung as it were a new song before the throne:—and no man could learn that song, but the—redeemed from the earth.

REV. xiv. 3.

As sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing.—2 COR. vi. 10.

PREFACE.

COPIES of a few of these Hymns have already appeared in periodical publications, and in some recent collections. I have observed one or two of them attributed to persons who certainly had no concern in them, but as transcribers. All that have been at different times parted with in manuscript are included in the present volume; and (if the information were of any great importance) the public may be assured, that the whole number were composed by two persons only. The original design would not admit of any other association. A desire of promoting the faith and comfort of sincere Christians, though the principal, was not the only motive to this undertaking. It was likewise intended as a monument, to perpetuate the remembrance of an intimate and endeared friendship. With this pleasing view, I entered upon my part, which would have been smaller than it is, and the book would have appeared much sooner, and in a very different form, if the wise, though mysterious, providence of God, had not seen fit to cross my wishes. We had not proceeded far upon our proposed plan, before my dear friend was prevented, by a long and affecting indisposition, from affording me any farther assistance. My grief and disappointment were great; I hung my harp upon the willows, and for some time thought myself determined to proceed no farther without him. Yet my mind was afterwards led to resume the service. My progress in it, amidst a variety of other engagements, has been slow; yet in a course of years, the Hymns amounted to a considerable number. And my deference to the

judgement and desires of others, has at length overcome the reluctance I long felt to see them in print, while I had so few of my friend's hymns to insert in the collection. Though it is possible a good judge of composition might be able to distinguish those which are his, I have thought it proper to preclude a misapplication, by prefixing the letter C to each of them. For the rest I must be responsible.

There is a style and manner suited to the composition of hymns, which may be more successfully, or at least more easily, attained by a versifier, than by a poet. They should be *Hymns*, not *Odes*, if designed for public worship, and for the use of plain people. Perspicuity, simplicity, and ease, should be chiefly attended to: and the imagery and colouring of poetry, if admitted at all, should be indulged very sparingly, and with great judgement. The late Dr. Watts, many of whose hymns are admirable patterns in this species of writing, might, as a poet, have a right to say, that it cost him some labour to restrain his fire, and to accommodate himself to the capacities of common readers. But it would not become me to make such a declaration. It behoved me to do my best. But though I would not offend readers of taste by a wilful coarseness and negligence, I do not write professedly for them. If the Lord, whom I serve, has been pleased to favour me with that mediocrity of talent, which may qualify me for usefulness to the weak and the poor of his flock, without quite disgusting persons of superior discernment, I have reason to be satisfied.

As the workings of the heart of man, and of the Spirit of God, are in general the same in all who are the subjects of grace, I hope most of these hymns, being the fruit and expression of my own

experience, will coincide with the views of real Christians of all denominations. But I cannot expect that every sentiment I have advanced will be universally approved. However, I am not conscious of having written a single line with an intention either to flatter or to offend any party or person upon earth. I have simply declared my own views and feelings, as I might have done if I had composed hymns in some of the newly discovered islands in the South Sea, where no person had any knowledge of the name of Jesus, but myself. I am a friend of peace; and being deeply convinced that no one can profitably understand the great truths and doctrines of the Gospel any farther than he is taught of God, I have not a wish to obtrude my own tenets upon others, in a way of controversy; yet I do not think myself bound to conceal them. Many gracious persons (for many such I am persuaded there are), who differ from me, more or less, in those points which are called Calvinistic, appear desirous that the Calvinist should, for their sakes, studiously avoid every expression which they cannot approve. Yet few of them, I believe, impose a like restraint upon themselves, but think the importance of what they deem to be truth justifies them in speaking their sentiments plainly and strongly. May I not plead for an equal liberty? The views I have received of the doctrines of grace are essential to my peace; I could not live comfortably a day, or an hour, without them. I likewise believe, yea, so far as my poor attainments warrant me to speak, I know them to be friendly to holiness, and to have a direct influence in producing and maintaining a Gospel conversation; and therefore I must not be ashamed of them.

The hymns are distributed into three books. In

the first I have classed those which are formed upon select passages of Scripture, and placed them in the order of the books of the Old and New Testament. The second contains Occasional Hymns, suited to particular seasons, or suggested by particular events or subjects. The third Book is miscellaneous, comprising a variety of subjects relative to a life of faith in the Son of God, which have no express reference either to a single text of Scripture, or to any determinate season or incident. These are farther subdivided into distinct heads. This arrangement is not so accurate but that several of the hymns might have been differently disposed. Some attention to method may be found convenient; though a logical exactness was hardly practicable. As some subjects in the several books are nearly coincident, I have, under the divisions in the third Book, pointed out those which are similar in the two former. And I have likewise here and there, in the first and second, made a reference to hymns of a like import in the third.

This publication, which, with my humble prayer to the Lord for his blessing upon it, I offer to the service and acceptance of all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, of every name and in every place, into whose hands it may come, I more particularly dedicate to my dear friends in the parish and neighbourhood of Olney, for whose use the hymns were originally composed; and as a testimony of the sincere love I bare them, and as a token of my gratitude to the Lord and to them, for the comfort and satisfaction with which the discharge of my ministry among them has been attended.

The hour is approaching, and, at my time of life, cannot be very distant, when my heart, my pen, and

my tongue, will no longer be able to move in their service. But I trust, while my heart continues to beat, it will feel a warm desire for the prosperity of their souls; and while my hand can write, and my tongue speak, it will be the business and the pleasure of my life, to aim at promoting their growth and establishment in the grace of our God and Saviour. To this precious grace I commend them, and earnestly entreat them, and all who love his name, to strive mightily with their prayers to God for me, that I may be preserved faithful to the end, and enabled at last to finish my course with joy.

JOHN NEWTON.

Olney, Bucks,
February 15, 1779.

OLNEY HYMNS,

&c.

BOOK I.

ON SELECT PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE.

GENESIS.

HYMN I. *Adam.* Chap. iii.

1 On man, in his own image made,
How much did God bestow!
The whole creation homage paid,
And own'd him lord below.

2 He dwelt in Eden's garden, stor'd
With sweets for ev'ry sense;
And there, with his descending Lord,
He walk'd in confidence.

3 But, oh! by sin how quickly chang'd!
His honour forfeited,
His heart from God and truth estrang'd,
His conscience fill'd with dread!

4 Now from his Maker's voice he flees,
Which was before his joy;
And thinks to hide, amidst the trees,
From an all-seeing eye.

5 Compell'd to answer to his name,
With stubbornness and pride,
He cast on God himself the blame;
Nor once for mercy cry'd.

6 But grace, unask'd, his heart subdu'd,
And all his guilt forgave;
By faith the promis'd Seed he view'd,
And felt his power to save.

7 Thus we ourselves would justify,
Though we the law transgress;
Like him, unable to deny,
Unwilling to confess.

8 But when by faith the sinner sees
A pardon bought with blood,
Then he forsakes his foolish pleas,
And gladly turns to God.

II. *Cain and Abel.* Chap. iv. 3—8.

1 When Adam fell, he quickly lost
God's image which he once possess'd:
See *all* our nature since could boast
In Cain, his first-born son, express'd!

2 The sacrifice the Lord ordain'd,
In type of the Redeemer's blood,
Self-righteous reas'ning Cain disdain'd,
And thought his own first-fruits as good.

3 Yet rage and envy fill'd his mind,
When, with a sullen downcast look,
He saw his brother favour find,
Who God's appointed method took.

4 By Cain's own hand good Abel died,
Because the Lord approv'd his faith;
And when his blood for vengeance cry'd,
He vainly thought to hide his death.

5 Such was the wicked murd'rer Cain,
And such by nature still are we,
Until by grace we're born again,
Malicious, blind, and proud as he.

6 Like him, the way of grace we slight,
And in our own devices trust;
Call evil good, and darkness light,
And hate and persecute the just.

7 The saints in ev'ry age and place
Have found his history fulfill'd;
The numbers all our thoughts surpass,
Of Abels, whom the Cains have kill'd!*

8 Thus Jesus fell—but, oh! his blood
Far better things than Abel's cries,†
Obtains his murd'rers peace with God,
And gains them mansions in the skies.

III. C. *Walking with God.* Chap. v. 24.

1. Oh! for a closer walk with God,
A calm and heav'nly frame;
A light, to shine upon the road
That leads me to the Lamb!

2 Where is the blessedness I knew
When first I saw the Lord?
Where is the soul-refreshing view
Of Jesus, and his word?

* Rom. viii. 36. † Heb. xii. 24.

3 What peaceful hours I once enjoy'd!
How sweet their mem'ry still!
But they have left an aching void,
The world can never fill.

4 Return, O holy Dove, return!
Sweet messenger of rest;
I hate the sins that made thee mourn,
And drove thee from my breast.

5 The dearest idol I have known,
Whate'er that idol be,
Help me to tear it from thy throne,
And worship only thee.

6 So shall my walk be close with God,
Calm and serene my frame;
So purer light shall mark the road
That leads me to the Lamb.

IV. *Another.*

1 By faith in Christ I walk with God,
With heav'n, my journey's end, in view;
Supported by his staff and rod,*
My road is safe and pleasant too.

2 I travel through a desert wide,
Where many round me blindly stray:
But he vouchsafes to be my guide,†
And will not let me miss my way.

3 Though snares and dangers throng my path,
And earth and hell my course withstand,
I triumph over all by faith,‡
Guarded by his almighty hand.

* Psal. xxiii. 4. † Psal. cvii. ‡ Psal. xxvii. 1, 2.

4 The wilderness affords no food,
But God for my support prepares;
Provides me ev'ry needful good,
And frees my soul from wants and cares.

5 With him sweet converse I maintain,
Great as he is, I dare be free;
I tell him all my grief and pain,
And he reveals his love to me.

6 Some cordial from his word he brings,
Whene'er my feeble spirit faints;
At once my soul revives and sings,
And yields no more to sad complaints.

7 I pity all that worldlings talk
Of pleasures that will quickly end;
Be this my choice, O Lord, to walk
With thee, my Guide, my Guard, my Friend!

V. *Lot in Sodom.* Chap. xiii. 10.

1 How hurtful was the choice of Lot,
Who took up his abode
(Because it was a fruitful spot)
With them who fear'd not God!

2 A pris'ner he was quickly made,
Bereav'd of all his store;
And, but for Abraham's timely aid,
He had return'd no more.

3 Yet still he seem'd resolv'd to stay,
As if it were his rest;
Altho' their sins from day to day*
His righteous soul distress'd.

* 2 Peter, ii. 8.

4 A while he stay'd with anxious mind,
Expos'd to scorn and strife;
At last he left his all behind,
And fled to save his life.

5 In vain his sons-in-law he warn'd,
They thought he told his dreams:
His daughters, too, of them had learn'd,
And perish'd in the flames.

6 His wife escap'd a little way,
But dy'd for looking back:
Does not her case to pilgrims say,
"Beware of growing slack?"

7 Yea, Lot himself could ling'ring stand,
Though vengeance was in view;
'Twas mercy pluck'd him by the hand,
Or he had perish'd too.

8 The doom of Sodom will be ours,
If to the earth we cleave;
Lord, quicken all our drowsy pow'rs,
To flee to thee and live.

VI. C. *Jehovah-Jireh. The Lord will provide.* Chap. xxii. 14.

1 The saints should never be dismay'd,
Nor sink in hopeless fear;
For when they least expect his aid,
The Saviour will appear.

2 This Abraham found; he rais'd the knife,
God saw, and said, "Forbear:
Yon ram shall yield his meaner life;
Behold the victim there."

3 Once David seem'd Saul's certain prey:
But, hark! the foe's at hand;*
Saul turns his arms another way,
To save th' invaded land.

4 When Jonah sunk beneath the wave,
He thought to rise no more;†
But God prepar'd a fish to save
And bear him to the shore.

5 Blest proofs of pow'r and grace divine,
That meet us in his word!
May ev'ry deep-felt care of mine
Be trusted with the Lord.

6 Wait for his seasonable aid,
And though it tarry, wait:
The promise may be long delay'd,
But cannot come too late.

VII. *The Lord will provide.*

1 Though troubles assail,
And dangers affright,
Though friends should all fail,
And foes all unite;
Yet one thing secures us,
Whatever betide,
The Scripture assures us,
The Lord will provide.

2 The birds without barn
Or storehouse are fed,
From them let us learn
To trust for our bread:

* 1 Sam. xxiii. 27. † Jonah, i. 17.

His saints what is fitting,
Shall ne'er be deny'd,
So long as 'tis written,
The Lord will provide.

3 We may, like the ships,
By tempests be tost
On perilous deeps,
But cannot be lost:
Though Satan enrages
The wind and the tide,
The promise engages,
The Lord will provide.

4 His call we obey,
Like Abra'm of old,
Not knowing our way,
But faith makes us bold;
For though we are strangers,
We have a good guide,
And trust in all dangers,
The Lord will provide.

5 When Satan appears
To stop up our path,
And fill us with fears,
We triumph by faith:
He cannot take from us,
Though oft he has try'd,
This heart-cheering promise,
The Lord will provide.

6 He tells us we're weak,
Our hope is in vain,
The good that we seek
We ne'er shall obtain;

But when such suggestions
Our spirits have ply'd,
This answers all questions,
The Lord will provide.

7 No strength of our own,
Or goodness, we claim;
Yet since we have known
The Saviour's great name,
In this our strong tow'r
For safety we hide,
The Lord is our pow'r,
The Lord will provide.

8 When life sinks apace,
And death is in view,
This word of his grace
Shall comfort us through;
No fearing nor doubting
With Christ on our side,
We hope to die shouting,
The Lord will provide.

VIII. *Esau.* Chap. xxv. 34. Heb. xii. 16.

1 Poor Esau repented too late,
That once he his birth-right despis'd,
And sold, for a morsel of meat,
What could not too highly be priz'd:
How great was his anguish when told,
The blessing he sought to obtain
Was gone with the birth-right he sold,
And none could recall it again!

2 He stands as a warning to all,
Wherever the Gospel shall come;
O hasten and yield to the call,
While yet for repentance there's room!

Your season will quickly be past;
Then hear and obey it to-day,
Lest, when you seek mercy at last,
The Saviour should frown you away.

3 What is it the world can propose?
A morsel of meat at the best?
For this are you willing to lose
A share in the joys of the blest?
Its pleasures will speedily end,
Its favour and praise are but breath;
And what can its profits befriend
Your soul in the moments of death?

4 If Jesus, for these, you despise,
And sin to the Saviour prefer;
In vain your entreaties and cries,
When summon'd to stand at his bar:
How will you his presence abide?
What anguish will torture your heart!
The saints all enthron'd by his side,
And you be compell'd to depart.

5 Too often, dear Saviour, have I
Preferr'd some poor trifle to thee;
How is it thou dost not deny
The blessing and birth-right to me?
No better than Esau I am,
Though pardon and heaven be mine;
To me belongs nothing but shame,
The praise and the glory be thine.

IX. *Jacob's Ladder.* Chap. xxviii. 12.

1 If the Lord our leader be,
We may follow without fear;
East or west, by land or sea,
Home, with him, is ev'ry where:

When from Esau Jacob fled,
Though his pillow was a stone,
And the ground his humble bed,
Yet he was not left alone.

2 Kings are often waking kept,
Rack'd with cares on beds of state;
Never king like Jacob slept,
For he lay at heaven's gate;
Lo! he saw a ladder rear'd,
Reaching to the heavenly throne;
At the top the Lord appear'd,
Spake and claim'd him for his own:

3 "Fear not, Jacob, thou art mine,
"And my presence with thee goes;
"On thy heart my love shall shine,
"And my arm subdue thy foes;
"From my promise comfort take,
"For my help in trouble call;
"Never will I thee forsake,
"Till I have accomplish'd all."

4 Well does Jacob's ladder suit
To the Gospel throne of grace;
We are at the ladder's foot,
Ev'ry hour, in ev'ry place:
By assuming flesh and blood,
Jesus heav'n and earth unites;
We, by faith ascend to God, *
God to dwell with us delights.

5 They who know the Saviour's name,
Are for all events prepar'd;
What can changes do to them
Who have such a guide and guard?

* 2 Cor. vi. 16.

Should they traverse earth around,
To the ladder still they come:
Ev'ry spot is holy ground,
God is there—and he's their home.

X. *My name is Jacob.* Chap. xxxii. 27.

1 Nay, I cannot let thee go,
Till a blessing thou bestow;
Dot not turn away thy face,
Mine's an urgent, pressing case.

2 Dost thou ask me, who I am?
Ah! my Lord, thou know'st my name:
Yet the question gives a plea
To support my suit with thee.

3 Thou didst once a wretch behold,
In rebellion blindly bold,
Scorn thy grace, thy pow'r defy,
That poor rebel, Lord, was I.

4 Once a sinner, near despair,
Sought thy mercy-seat by pray'r:
Mercy heard and set him free;
Lord, that mercy came to me.

5 Many years have pass'd since then,
Many changes I have seen,
Yet have been upheld till now:
Who could hold me up but thou?

6 Thou hast help'd in ev'ry need,
This emboldens me to plead;
After so much mercy past,
Canst thou let me sink at last?

7 No—I must maintain my hold,
'Tis thy goodness makes me bold;
I can no denial take,
When I plead for Jesus' sake.

XI. *Plenty in the time of Dearth.* Chap. xii. 56.

1 My soul once had its plenteous years,
And throve, with peace and comfort fill'd,
Like the fat kine and ripen'd ears
Which Pharaoh in his dream beheld.

2 With pleasing frames and grace receiv'd,
With means and ordinances fed,
How happy for a while I liv'd,
And little fear'd the want of bread!

3 But famine came, and left no sign
Of all the plenty I had seen;
Like the dry ears and half-starv'd kine,
I then look'd wither'd, faint, and lean.

4 To Joseph the Egyptians went;
To Jesus I made known my case;
He, when my little stock was spent,
Open'd his magazine of grace.

5 For he the time of dearth foresaw,
And made provision long before;
That famish'd souls like me might draw
Supplies from his unbounded store.

6 Now on his bounty I depend,
And live from fear of dearth secure;
Maintain'd by such a mighty Friend,
I cannot want till he is poor.

7 O sinners, hear his gracious call!
His mercy's door stands open wide;
He has enough to feed you all,
And none who come shall be deny'd.

XII. *Joseph made known to his Brethren.* Chap. xli. 3, 4.

1 When Joseph his brethren beheld,
Afflicted and trembling with fear,
His heart with compassion was fill'd;
From weeping he could not forbear.
A while his behaviour was rough,
To bring their past sin to their mind;
But when they were humbled enough,
He hasten'd to show himself kind.

2 How little they thought it was he
Whom they had ill-treated and sold!
How great their confusion must be
As soon as his name he had told!
"I'm Joseph, your brother," he said,
"And still to my heart you are dear;
"You sold me, and thought I was dead,
"But God, for your sakes, sent me here."

3 Though greatly distressed before,
When charg'd with purloining the cup,
They now were confounded much more,
Not one of them durst to look up.
"Can Joseph, whom we would have slain,
"Forgive us the evil we did?
"And will he our households maintain?
"O this is a brother indeed!"

4 Thus dragg'd by my conscience, I came,
And laden with guilt, to the Lord,
Surrounded with terror and shame,
Unable to utter a word.

At first he look'd stern and severe;
What anguish then pierced my heart!
Expecting each moment to hear
The sentence, "Thou cursed, depart!"

5 But, oh! what surprise when he spoke,
While tenderness beam'd in his face;
My heart then to pieces was broke,
O'erwhelm'd and confounded by grace:
"Poor sinner, I know thee full well,
"By thee I was sold and was slain;
"But I dy'd to redeem thee from hell,
"And raise thee in glory to reign.

6 "I'm Jesus, whom thou hast blasphem'd,
"And crucify'd often afresh;
"But let me henceforth be esteem'd,
"Thy brother, thy bone, and thy flesh:
"My pardon I freely bestow,
"Thy wants I will fully supply;
"I'll guide thee and guard thee below,
"And soon will remove thee on high.

7 "Go publish to sinners around,
"That they may be willing to come,
"The mercy which now you have found,
"And tell them that yet there is room."
Oh, sinners, the message obey!
No more vain excuses pretend;
But come, without further delay,
To Jesus, our brother and friend.

EXODUS.

XIII. *The Bitter Waters.* Chap. xv. 23—25.

1 Bitter, indeed, the waters are
Which in this desert flow;
Though to the eye they promise fair,
They taste of sin and woe.

2 Of pleasing draughts I once could dream;
But now, awake, I find,
That sin has poison'd ev'ry stream,
And left a curse behind.

3 But there's a wonder-working wood,
I've heard believers say,
Can make these bitter waters good,
And take the curse away.

4 The virtues of this healing tree
Are known and priz'd by few:
Reveal this secret, Lord, to me,
That I may prize it too.

5 The cross on which the Saviour dy'd,
And conquer'd for his saints;
This is the tree, by faith apply'd,
Which sweetens all complaints.

6 Thousands have found the bless'd effect,
Nor longer mourn their lot;
While on his sorrows they reflect,
Their own are all forgot.

7 When they, by faith, behold the cross,
Though many griefs they meet;
They draw a gain from ev'ry loss,
And find the bitter sweet.

XIV. C. *Jehovah Rophi,—I am the Lord that healeth thee.* Chap. xv.

1 HEAL us, Immanuel, here we are,
Waiting to feel thy touch;
Deep wounded souls to thee repair,
And, Saviour, we are such.

2 Our faith is feeble, we confess,
We faintly trust thy word:
But wilt thou pity us the less?
Be that far from the Lord!

3 Remember him who once apply'd,
With trembling, for relief;
"Lord, I believe," with tears he cried,
"O help my unbelief."*

4 She too, who touch'd thee in the press,
And healing virtue stole,
Was answer'd, "Daughter, go in peace,
"Thy faith hath made thee whole."†

5 Conceal'd amid the gath'ring throng,
She would have shunn'd thy view;
And if her faith was firm and strong,
Had strong misgivings too.

6 Like her, with hopes and fears, we come,
To touch thee if we may;
Oh! send us not despairing home,
Send none unheal'd away.

XV. *Manna.* Chap. xvi. 18.

1 MANNA to Israel well supply'd
The want of other bread;
While God is able to provide,
His people shall be fed.

* Mark, ix. 24. † Mark, v. 34.

2 (Thus though the corn and wine should fail,
And creature-streams be dry,
The pray'r of faith will still prevail
For blessings from on high.)

3 Of his kind care how sweet a proof!
It suited ev'ry taste:
Who gather'd most had just enough,
Enough, who gather'd least.

4 'Tis thus our gracious Lord provides
Our comforts and our cares;
His own unerring hand provides,
And gives us each our shares.

5 He knows how much the weak can bear,
And helps them when they cry;
The strongest have no strength to spare,
For such he'll strongly try.

6 Daily they saw the Manna come,
And cover all the ground;
But what they try'd to keep at home,
Corrupted soon was found.

7 Vain their attempt to store it up,
This was to tempt the Lord;
Israel must live by faith and hope,
And not upon a hoard.

XVI. *Manna hoarded.* Chap. xvi. 20.

1 The Manna, favour'd Israel's meat,
Was gather'd day by day;
When all the host was serv'd, the heat
Melted the rest away.

2 In vain to hoard it up they try'd,
Against to-morrow came;
It then bred worms and putrify'd,
And prov'd their sin and shame.

3 'Twas daily bread, and would not keep,
But must be still renew'd;
Faith should not want a hoard or heap,
But trust the Lord for food.

4 The truths by which the soul is fed,
Must thus be had afresh;
For notions resting in the head
Will only feed the flesh.

5 However true, they have no life
Or unction to impart;
They breed the worms of pride and strife,
But cannot cheer the heart.

6 Nor can the best experience past
The life of faith maintain;
The brightest hope will faint at last,
Unless supply'd again.

7 Dear Lord, while we in pray'r are found,
Do thou the Manna give;
Oh! let it fall on all around,
That we may eat and live.

XVII. C. *Jehovah Nissi.—The Lord my Banner.*
Chap. xvii. 15.

1 By whom was David taught
To aim the dreadful blow,
When he Goliath fought,
And laid the Gittite low?
No sword nor spear the stripling took,
But chose a pebble from the brook.

2 'Twas Israel's God and King,
Who sent him to the fight;
Who gave him strength to sling,
And skill to aim aright.
Ye feeble saints, your strength endures,
Because young David's God is yours.

3 Who order'd Gideon forth,
To storm th' invaders' camp,
With arms of little worth,
A pitcher and a lamp?*
The trumpets made his coming known,
And all the host was overthrown.

4 Oh! I have seen the day,
When, with a single word,
God helping me to say,
My trust is in the Lord,
My soul has quell'd a thousand foes,
Fearless of all that could oppose.

5 But unbelief, self-will,
Self-righteousness, and pride,
How often do they steal
My weapon from my side?
Yet David's Lord, and Gideon's Friend,
Will help his servant to the end.

XVIII. *The Golden Calf.* Chap. xxxii. 4. 31.

1 When Israel heard the fiery law
From Sinai's top proclaim'd,
Their hearts seem'd full of holy awe,
Their stubborn spirits tam'd.

* Judges, vii. 20.

2 Yet, as forgetting all they knew,
Ere forty days were past,
With blazing Sinai still in view,
A molten calf they cast.

3 Yea, Aaron, God's anointed priest,
Who on the mount had been,
He durst prepare the idol beast,
And lead them on to sin.

4 Lord, what is man, and what are we,
To recompense thee thus!
In their offence our own we see,
Their story points at us.

5 From Sinai we heard thee speak,
And from mount Calv'ry too;
And yet to idols oft we seek,
While thou art in our view.

6 Some golden calf, or golden dream,
Some fancied creature-good,
Presumes to share the heart with him,
Who bought the whole with blood.

7 Lord, save us from our golden calves,
Our sin with grief we own;
We would no more be thine by halves,
But live to thee alone.

LEVITICUS.

XIX. *The true Aaron.* Chap. viii. 7—9.

1 See Aaron, God's anointed priest,
Within the vail appear,
In robes of mystic meaning drest,
Presenting Israel's prayer.

2 The plate of gold which crowns his brows,
His holiness describes;
His breast displays, in shining rows,
The names of all the tribes.

3 With the atoning blood he stands
Before the mercy-seat;
And clouds of incense from his hands
Arise with odour sweet.

4 Urim and Thummim near his heart,
In rich engravings worn,
The sacred light of truth impart,
To teach and to adorn.

5 Through him the eye of faith descries,
A greater priest than he:
Thus Jesus pleads above the skies,
For you, my friends, and me.

6 He bears the names of all his saints
Deep on his heart engrav'd;
Attentive to the state and wants
Of all his love has sav'd.

7 In him a holiness complete,
Light and perfections shine;
And wisdom, grace, and glory meet;
A Saviour all divine.

8 The blood, which as a priest he bears
For sinners, is his own;
The incense of his prayers and tears
Perfume the holy throne.

9 In him my weary soul has rest,
Though I am weak and vile;
I read my name upon his breast,
And see the Father smile.

NUMBERS.

XX. *Balaam's Wish.* * Chap. xxiii. 10.

1 How blest the righteous are,
When they resign their breath!
No wonder Balaam wish'd to share
In such a happy death.

2 "Oh! let me die," said he,
"The death the righteous do;
"When life is ended, let me be
"Found with the faithful few."

3 The force of truth how great!
When enemies confess,
None but the righteous, whom they hate,
A solid hope possess.

4 But Balaam's wish was vain,
His heart was insincere;
He thirsted for unrighteous gain,
And sought a portion here.

5 He seem'd the Lord to know,
And to offend him loath;
But Mammon prov'd his overthrow,
For none can serve them both.

6 May you, my friends, and I,
Warning from hence receive;
If like the righteous we would die,
To choose the life they live.

* Book iii. Hymn 71.

JOSHUA.

XXI. *Gibeon.* Chap. x. 6.

1 When Joshua, by God's command,
Invaded Canaan's guilty land,
Gibeon, unlike the nations round,
Submission made, and mercy found.

2 Their stubborn neighbours who, enrag'd,
United war against them wag'd,
By Joshua soon were overthrown,
For Gibeon's cause was now his own.

3 He from whose arm they ruin fear'd,
Their leader and ally appear'd;
An emblem of the Saviour's grace,
To those who humbly seek his face.

4 The men of Gibeon wore disguise,
And gained their peace by framing lies;
For Joshua had no power to spare,
If he had known from whence they were.

5 But Jesus invitation sends,
Treating with rebels as his friends;
And holds the promise forth in view,
To all who for his mercy sue.

6 Too long his goodness I disdain'd,
Yet went at last and peace obtain'd;
But soon the noise of war I heard,
And former friends in arms appear'd;

7 Weak in myself, for help I cried,
"Lord, I am press'd on ev'ry side;
"The cause is thine, they fight with me,
"But ev'ry blow is aim'd at thee."

8 With speed to my relief he came,
And put my enemies to shame;
Thus sav'd by grace I live to sing
The love and triumphs of my King.

JUDGES.

XXII. C. *Jehovah Shalem,—The Lord send Peace.*
Chap. vi. 24.

1 JESUS, whose blood so freely stream'd
To satisfy the law's demand,
By thee from guilt and wrath redeem'd,
Before the Father's face I stand.

2 To reconcile offending man,
Make justice drop her angry rod;
What creature could have form'd the plan,
Or who fulfil it but a God?

3 No drop remains of all the curse,
For wretches who deserv'd the whole;
No arrows dipt in wrath, to pierce
The guilty, but returning soul.

4 Peace by such means so dearly bought,
What rebel could have hop'd to see?
Peace, by his injur'd Sov'reign wrought,
His Sov'reign fasten'd to a tree.

5 Now, Lord, thy feeble worm prepare!
For strife with earth and hell begins;
Confirm and gird me for the war,
They hate the soul that hates his sins.

6 Let them in horrid league agree!
They may assault, they may distress;
But cannot quench thy love to me,
Nor rob me of the Lord my peace.

XXIII. *Gideon's Fleece.* Chap. vi. 37—40.

1 The signs which God to Gideon gave,
His holy sov'reignty made known,
That He alone has pow'r to save,
And claims the glory as his own.

2 The dew which first the fleece had fill'd,
When all the earth was dry around,
Was from it afterwards withheld,
And only fell upon the ground.

3 To Israel thus the heavenly dew
Of saving truth was long restrain'd;
Of which the Gentiles nothing knew,
But dry and desolate remain'd.

4 But now the Gentiles have receiv'd
The balmy dew of Gospel peace;
And Israel, who his Spirit griev'd,
Is left a dry and empty fleece.

5 This dew still falls at his command,
To keep his chosen plants alive;
They shall, though in a thirsty land,
Like willows by the waters thrive. *

6 But chiefly when his people meet,
To hear his word and seek his face;
The gentle dew, with influence sweet,
Descends and nourishes their grace.

7 But, ah! what numbers still are dead,
Though under means of grace they lie!
The dew still falling round their head,
And yet their heart untouch'd and dry.

* Isa. xliv. 4.

8 Dear Saviour, hear us when we call,
To wrestling pray'r an answer give;
Pour down thy dew upon us all,
That all may feel, and all may live.

XXIV. *Samson's Lion.* Chap. xiv. 8.

1 THE lion that on Samson roar'd
And thirsted for his blood,
With honey afterwards was stor'd,
And furnish'd him with food.

2 Believers as they pass along,
With many lions meet,
But gather sweetness from the strong,
And from the eater, meat.

3 The lions rage and roar in vain,
For Jesus is their shield;
Their losses prove a certain gain,
Their troubles comfort yield.

4 The world and Satan join their strength,
To fill their souls with fears:
But crops of joy they reap at length,
From what they sow in tears.

5 Afflictions make them love the word,
Stir up their hearts to pray'r;
And many precious proofs afford
Of their Redeemer's care.

6 The lions roar, but cannot kill;
Then fear them not, my friends,
They bring us, though against their will,
The honey Jesus sends.

I SAMUEL.

XXV. *Hannah; or, the Throne of Grace.* Chap. i. 18.

1 When Hannah, press'd with grief,
Pour'd forth her soul in pray'r,
She quickly found relief,
And left her burden there:
Like her, in ev'ry trying case,
Let us approach the throne of grace.

2 When she began to pray,
Her heart was pain'd and sad,
But, ere she went away,
Was comforted and glad:
In trouble, what a resting-place
Have they who know the throne of grace!

3 Though men and devils rage,
And threaten to devour;
The saints, from age to age,
Are safe from all their pow'r;
Fresh strength they gain to run their race,
By waiting at the throne of grace.

4 Eli her case mistook;
How was her spirit mov'd
By his unkind rebuke?
But God her cause approv'd.
We need not fear a creature's face,
While welcome at a throne of grace.

5 She was not fill'd with wine,
As Eli rashly thought;
But with a faith divine,
And found the help she sought:
Though men despise, and call us base,
Still let us ply the throne of grace.

6 Men have not pow'r nor skill
With troubled souls to bear;
Though they express good-will,
Poor comforters they are:
But swelling sorrows sink apace,
When we approach the throne of grace.

7 Numbers before have try'd,
And found the promise true;
Nor yet one been deny'd,
Then why should I, or you?
Let us, by faith, their footsteps trace,
And hasten to the throne of grace.

8 As fogs obscure the light,
And taint the morning air,
But soon are put to flight,
If the bright sun appear;
Thus Jesus will our troubles chase,
By shining from the throne of grace. *

XXVI. *Dagon before the Ark.* Chap. v. 4, 5.

1 When first to make my heart his own,
The Lord reveal'd his mighty grace,
Self reign'd, like Dagon, on the throne,
But could not long maintain its place.

2 It fell, and own'd the pow'r divine
(Grace can, with ease, the vict'ry gain),
But soon this wretched heart of mine,
Contriv'd to set it up again.

3 Again the Lord his name proclaim'd,
And brought the hateful idol low;
Then self, like Dagon, broken, maim'd,
Seem'd to receive a mortal blow.

* Book ii. Hymn 61.

4 Yet self is not of life bereft,
Nor ceases to oppose his will;
Though but a maimed stump be left,
'Tis Dagon, 'tis an idol still.

5 Lord! must I always guilty prove,
And idols in my heart have room?*
Oh! let the fire of heav'nly love
The very stump of self consume.

XXVII. *The Milch Kine drawing the Ark: Faith's Surrender of all.* Chap. vi. 12.

1 The kine unguided went
By the directest road;
When the Philistines homeward sent
The ark of Israel's God.

2 Lowing they pass'd along,
And left their calves shut up;
They felt an instinct for their young,
But would not turn or stop.

3 Shall brutes, devoid of thought,
Their Maker's will obey;
And we, who by his grace are taught,
More stubborn prove than they?

4 He shed his precious blood,
To make us his alone;
If wash'd in that atoning flood,
We are no more our own.

5 If he his will reveal,
Let us obey his call,
And think, whate'er the flesh may feel,
His love deserves our all.

* Hosea, xiv. 8.

6 We should maintain in view
His glory, as our end;
Too much we cannot bear, or do,
For such a matchless friend.

7 His saints should stand prepar'd
In duty's path to run;
Nor count their greatest trials hard,
So that his will be done.

8 With Jesus for our guide,
The path is safe, though rough;
The promise says, "I will provide,"
And faith replies, "Enough!"

XXVIII. *Saul's Armour.* Chap. xvii. 38—40.

1 When first my soul enlisted
My Saviour's foes to fight,
Mistaken friends insisted
I was not arm'd aright:
So Saul advised David
He certainly would fail,
Nor could his life be saved
Without a coat of mail.

2 But David, though he yielded
To put the armour on,
Soon found he could not wield it,
And ventur'd forth with none.
With only sling and pebble,
He fought the fight of faith;
The weapons seem'd but feeble,
Yet prov'd Goliath's death.

3 Had I by him been guided,
And quickly thrown away
The armour men provided,
I might have gain'd the day;
But arm'd as they advis'd me,
My expectations fail'd;
My enemy surpris'd me,
And had almost prevail'd.

4 Furnish'd with books and notions,
And arguments and pride,
I practis'd all my motions,
And Satan's pow'r defy'd:
But soon perceiv'd, with trouble,
That these would do no good;
Iron to him is stubble,
And brass like rotten wood.*

5 I triumph'd at a distance,
While he was out of sight,
But faint was my resistance,
When forc'd to join in fight:
He broke my sword in shivers,
And pierc'd my boasted shield,
Laugh'd at my vain endeavours,
And drove me from the field.

6 Satan will not be braved
By such a worm as I;
Then let me learn with David
To trust in the Most High;
To plead the name of Jesus,
And use the sling of pray'r:
Thus arm'd, when Satan sees us,
He'll tremble and despair.

* Job xli. 27.

II SAMUEL.

XXIX. *David's Fall.* Chap. xi. 27.

1 How David, when by sin deceiv'd,
From bad to worse went on!
For when the Holy Spirit's griev'd,
Our strength and guard are gone.

2 His eye, on Bathsheba once fix'd,
With poison fill'd his soul;
He ventur'd on adult'ry next,
And murder crown'd the whole.

3 So from a spark of fire at first,
That has not been descry'd,
A dreadful flame has often burst,
And ravag'd far and wide.

4 When sin deceives, it hardens too;
For, though he vainly sought
To hide his crimes from public view,
Of God he little thought.

5 He neither would nor could, repent,
No true compunction felt,
'Till God, in mercy, Nathan sent,
His stubborn heart to melt.

6 The parable held forth a fact,
Design'd his case to show;
But, though the picture was exact,
Himself he did not know.

7 "Thou art the man," the prophet said;
That word his slumber broke:
And when he own'd his sin, and pray'd,
The Lord forgiveness spoke.

8 Let those who think they stand beware,
For David stood before;
Nor let the fallen soul despair,
For mercy can restore.

XXX. *Is this thy kindness to thy friend?* Chap. xvi. 17.

1 Poor, weak, and worthless, though I am,
I have a rich, almighty Friend;
Jesus, the Saviour, is his name,
He freely loves, and without end.

2 He ransom'd me from hell with blood,
And by his pow'r my foes controll'd;
He found me wand'ring far from God,
And brought me to his chosen fold.

3 He cheers my heart, my want supplies,
And says that I shall shortly be
Enthron'd with him above the skies—
Oh! what a friend is Christ to me!

4 But, ah! my inmost spirit mourns,
And well my eyes with tears may swim,
To think of my perverse returns;
I've been a faithless friend to him.

5 Often my gracious Friend I grieve,
Neglect, distrust, and disobey,
And often Satan's lies believe,
Sooner than all my Friend can say.

6 He bids me always freely come,
And promises whate'er I ask:
But I am straiten'd, cold, and dumb,
And count my privilege a task.

7 Before the world, that hates his cause,
My treach'rous heart has throbb'd with shame;
Loath to forego the world's applause,
I hardly dare avow his name.

8 Sure, were I not most vile and base,
I could not thus my Friend requite!
And were not he the God of grace,
He'd frown and spurn me from his sight.

I KINGS.

XXXI. *Ask what I shall give thee.* Chap. iii. 5.

1 Come, my soul, thy suit prepare,
Jesus loves to answer pray'r,
He himself has bid thee pray,
Therefore will not say thee nay.

2 Thou art coming to a King,
Large petitions with thee bring; *
For his grace and pow'r are such,
None can ever ask too much.

3 With my burden I begin,
Lord, remove this load of sin!
Let thy blood, for sinners spilt,
Set my conscience free from guilt.

4 Lord! I come to thee for rest,
Take possession of my breast;
There thy blood-bought right maintain,
And without a rival reign.

5 As the image in the glass
Answers the beholder's face;
Thus unto my heart appear,
Print thine own resemblance there.

* Psalm lxxxi. 10.

6 While I am a pilgrim here,
Let thy love my spirit cheer;
As my Guide, my Guard, my Friend,
Lead me to my journey's end.

7 Show me what I have to do,
Ev'ry hour my strength renew;
Let me live a life of faith,
Let me die thy people's death.

XXXII. *Another.*

1 If Solomon for wisdom pray'd,
The Lord before had made him wise;
Else he another choice had made,
And ask'd for what the worldlings prize.

2 Thus he invites his people still;
He first instructs them how to choose,
Then bids them ask whate'er they will,
Assur'd that He will not refuse.

3 Our wishes would our ruin prove,
Could we our wretched choice obtain,
Before we feel the Saviour's love
Kindle our love to him again.

4 But when our hearts perceive his worth,
Desires, till then unknown, take place;
Our spirits cleave no more to earth,
But pant for holiness and grace.

5 And dost thou say, "Ask what thou wilt?"
Lord, I would seize the golden hour;
I pray to be releas'd from guilt,
And freed from sin and Satan's pow'r.

6 More of thy presence, Lord, impart,
More of thine image let me bear;
Erect thy throne within my heart,
And reign without a rival there.

7 Give me to read my pardon seal'd,
And from thy joy to draw my strength:
To have thy boundless love reveal'd
In all its height, and breadth, and length.

8 Grant these requests, I ask no more,
But to thy care the rest resign;
Sick, or in health, or rich, or poor,
All shall be well if thou art mine.

XXXIII. *Another.*

1 Behold the throne of grace!
The promise calls me near;
There Jesus shows a smiling face,
And waits to answer pray'r.

2 That rich atoning blood
Which sprinkled round I see,
Provides for those who come to God
An all-prevailing plea.

3 My soul, ask what thou wilt,
Thou canst not be too bold;
Since his own blood for thee he spilt,
What else can he withhold?

4 Beyond thy utmost wants
His love and pow'r can bless;
To praying souls he always grants
More than they can express.

5 Since 'tis the Lord's command,
My mouth I open wide;
Lord, open thou thy bounteous hand,
That I may be supply'd.

6 Thine image, Lord, bestow,
Thy presence and thy love:
I ask to serve thee here below,
And reign with thee above.

7 Teach me to live by faith,
Conform my will to thine;
Let me victorious be in death,
And then in glory shine.

If thou these blessings give,
And wilt my portion be,
Cheerful the world's poor toys I leave
To them who know not thee.

XXXIV. *Queen of Sheba.* Chap. x. 1—9.

1 From Sheba a distant report
Of Solomon's glory and fame,
Invited the queen to his court,
But all was outdone when she came:
She cry'd, with a pleasing surprise,
When first she before him appear'd,
"How much what I see with my eyes
"Surpasses the rumour I heard!"

2 When once to Jerusalem come,
The treasure and train she had brought,
The wealth she possessed at home,
No longer had place in her thought:

His house, his attendants, his throne,
All struck her with wonder and awe;
The glory of Solomon shone
In every object she saw.

3 But Solomon most she admir'd,
Whose spirit conducted the whole;
His wisdom, which God had inspir'd,
His bounty and greatness of soul:
Of all the hard questions she put,
A ready solution he show'd;
Exceeded her wish and her suit,
And more than she ask'd him bestow'd.

4 Thus I, when the Gospel proclaim'd
The Saviour's great name in my ears,
The wisdom for which he is fam'd,
The love which to sinners he bears;
I long'd, and I was not deny'd,
That I in his presence might bow:
I saw, and transported I cry'd,
"A greater than Solomon Thou!"

5 My conscience no comfort could find,
By doubt and hard questions oppos'd;
But He restor'd peace to my mind,
And answer'd each doubt I propos'd:
Beholding me poor and distress'd
His bounty supplied all my wants;
My pray'r could have never express'd
So much as this Solomon grants.

6 I heard, and was slow to believe,
But now with my eyes I behold
Much more than my heart could conceive,
Or language could ever have told.

How happy thy servants must be,
Who always before thee appear!
Vouchsafe, Lord, this blessing to me,
I find it is good to be here.

XXXV. *Elijah fed by Ravens.** Chap. xvii. 6.

1 ELIJAH's example declares,
Whatever distress may betide,
The saints may commit all their cares
To Him who will surely provide.
When rain long withheld from the earth
Occasion'd a famine of bread,
The prophet, secur'd from the dearth,
By ravens was constantly fed.

2 More likely to rob, than to feed,
Were ravens who live upon prey;
But when the Lord's people have need,
His goodness will find out a way:
This instance to those may seem strange,
Who know not how faith can prevail;
But sooner all nature shall change,
Than one of God's promises fail.

3 Nor is it a singular case,
The wonder is often renew'd;
And many can say to his praise,
He sends them by ravens their food:
Thus worldlings, though ravens indeed,
Though greedy and selfish their mind,
If God has a servant to feed,
Against their own wills can be kind.

* Book iii. Hymn 47.

4 Thus Satan, that raven unclean,
Who croaks in the ears of the saints,
Compell'd by a power unseen,
Administers oft to their wants:
God teaches them how to find food
From all the temptations they feel;
This raven, who thirsts for my blood,
Has help'd me to many a meal.

5 How safe, and how happy, are they
Who on the good Shepherd rely!
He gives them out strength for their day,
Their wants he will surely supply:
He ravens and lions can tame,
All creatures obey his command;
Then let me rejoice in his name,
And leave all my cares in his hand.

XXXVI. *The Meal and Cruse of Oil.* Chap. xvii. 16.

1 By the poor widow's oil and meal
Elijah was sustain'd;
Though small the stock, it lasted well,
For God the store maintain'd.

2 It seem'd as if, from day to day,
They were to eat and die;
But still, though in a secret way,
He sent a fresh supply.

3 Thus to his poor he still will give
Just for the present hour;
But for to-morrow they must live
Upon his word and pow'r.

4 No barn nor storehouse they possess
On which they can depend;
Yet have no cause to fear distress,
For Jesus is their friend.

5 Then let not doubts your mind assail,
Remember God has said,
"The cruse and barrel shall not fail,
"My people shall be fed."

6 And thus, though faint it often seems,
He keeps their grace alive;
Supply'd by his refreshing streams,
Their dying hopes revive.

7 Though in our ourselves we have no stock,
The Lord is nigh to save;
His door flies open when we knock,
And 'tis but ask and have.

II KINGS.

XXXVII. *Jericho; or, the Waters healed.* Chap. ii. 19—22.

1 Though Jericho pleasantly stood,
And look'd like a promising soil,
The harvest produc'd little food,
To answer the husbandman's toil.
The water some property had,
Which poisonous prov'd to the ground;
The springs were corrupted and bad,
The streams spread a barrenness round.

2 But soon by the cruse and the salt,
Prepar'd by Elijah's command,
The water was cur'd of its fault,
And plenty enriched the land:

An emblem sure this of the grace
On fruitless dead sinners bestow'd;
For man is in Jericho's case,
Till cur'd by the mercy of God.

3 How noble a creature he seems;
What knowledge, invention, and skill!
How large and extensive his schemes!
How much can he do if he will!
His zeal to be learned and wise
Will yield to no limits or bars;
He measures the earth and the skies,
And numbers and marshals the stars.

4 Yet still he is barren of good;
In vain are his talents and art;
For sin has infected his blood,
And poison'd the streams of his heart:
Though cockatrice' eggs he can hatch,
Or, spider-like, cobwebs can weave,*
'Tis madness to labour and watch
For what will destroy or deceive.

5 But grace, like the salt in the cruse,
When cast in the spring of the soul;
A wonderful change will produce,
Diffusing new life through the whole:
The wilderness blooms like a rose,
The heart which was vile and abhorr'd,
Now fruitful and beautiful grows,
The garden and joy of the Lord.

* Isaiah lix. 6.

XXXVIII. *Naaman.* Chap. v. 14.

1 Before Elisha's gate
The Syrian leper stood;
But could not brook to wait,
He deem'd himself too good:
He thought the prophet would attend,
And not to him a message send.

2 Have I this journey come,
And will he not be seen?
I were as well at home,
Would washing make me clean;
Why must I wash in Jordan's flood?
Damascus' rivers are as good.

3 Thus, by his foolish pride,
He almost miss'd a cure;
Howe'er at length he try'd,
And found the method sure:
Soon as his pride was brought to yield,
The leprosy was quickly heal'd.

4 Leprous and proud as he,
To Jesus thus I came,
From sin to set me free,
When first I heard his fame:
Surely, thought I, my pompous train
Of vows and tears will notice gain.

5 My heart devis'd the way
Which I suppos'd he'd take;
And when I found delay,
Was ready to go back:
Had he some painful task enjoin'd,
I to performance seem'd inclin'd.

6 When by his word he spake,
"That fountain open'd see;
"'Twas open'd for thy sake,
"Go wash, and thou art free:"
Oh! how did my proud heart gainsay,
I fear'd to trust this simple way!

7 At length I trial made,
When I had much endur'd;
The message I obey'd,—
I wash'd, and I was cur'd:
Sinners, this healing fountain try,
Which cleans'd a wretch so vile as I.

XXXIX. *The Borrowed Axe.* Chap. vi. 5, 6.

1 The prophet's sons, in times of old,
Though to appearance poor,
Were rich without possessing gold,
And honour'd, though obscure.

2 In peace their daily bread they eat,
By honest labour earn'd;
While daily at Elisha's feet
They grace and wisdom learn'd.

3 The prophet's presence cheer'd their toil,
They watch'd the words he spoke,
Whether they turn'd the furrow'd soil,
Or fell'd the spreading oak.

4 Once, as they listen'd to his theme,
Their conference was stopp'd;
For one beneath the yielding stream,
A borrow'd axe had dropp'd.

5 "Alas! it was not mine," he said,
"How shall I make it good?"
Elisha heard, and when he pray'd,
The iron swam like wood.

6 If God, in such a small affair,
A miracle performs,
It shows his condescending care
Of poor unworthy worms.

7 Though kings and nations in his view
Are but as motes and dust,
His eye and ear are fix'd on you,
Who in his mercy trust.

8 Not one concern of ours is small,
If we belong to him;
To teach us this, the Lord of all
Once made the iron swim.

XL. *More with us than with them.* Chap. vi. 16.

1 Alas! Elisha's servant cry'd,
When he the Syrian army spy'd,:
But he was soon releas'd from care,
In answer to the prophet's pray'r.

2 Straightway he saw, with other eyes,
A greater army from the skies,
A fiery guard around the hill,
Thus are the saints preserved still.

3 When Satan and his host appear,
Like him, of old, I faint and fear;
Like him, by faith, with joy I see,
A greater host engag'd for me.

4 The saints espouse my cause by pray'r,
The angels make my soul their care;
Mine is the promise seal'd with blood,
And Jesus lives to make it good.

I CHRONICLES.

XLI. ***Faith's Review and Expectation.*** **Chap. xvii. 16, 17.**

1 AMAZING grace! (how sweet the sound)
That sav'd a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.

2 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears reliev'd;
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believ'd!

3 Through many dangers, toils, and snares,
I have already come;
'Tis grace has brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.

4 The Lord has promis'd good to me,
His word my hope secures:
He will my shield and portion be,
As long as life endures.

5 Yes, when this flesh and heart shall fail,
And mortal life shall cease,
I shall possess, within the vail,
A life of joy and peace.

6 The earth shall soon dissolve like snow,
The sun forbear to shine;
But God, who call'd me here below,
Will be for ever mine.

NEHEMIAH.

XLII. *The Joy of the Lord is your Strength.* Chap. viii. 10.

1 Joy is a fruit that will not grow
In nature's barren soil;
All we can boast, till Christ we know,
Is vanity and toil.

2 But where the Lord has planted grace,
And made his glories known,
There fruits of heav'nly joy and peace
Are found, and there alone.

3 A bleeding Saviour seen by faith,
A sense of pard'ning love,
A hope that triumphs over death,
Give joys like those above.

4 To take a glimpse within the vail,
To know that God is mine,
Are springs of joy that never fail,
Unspeakable! divine!

5 These are the joys which satisfy,
And sanctify, the mind;
Which make the spirit mount on high,
And leave the world behind.

6 No more, believers, mourn your lot;
But if you are the Lord's,
Resign to them that know him not
Such joys as earth affords.

JOB.

XLIII. *Oh that I were as in months past!* Chap. xxix. 2.

1 Sweet was the time when first I felt
The Saviour's pard'ning blood
Apply'd, to cleanse my soul from guilt,
And bring me home to God.

2 Soon as the morn the light reveal'd,
His praises tun'd my tongue;
And when the ev'ning shades prevail'd,
His love was all my song.

3 In vain the tempter spread his wiles,
The world no more could charm;
I liv'd upon my Saviour's smiles,
And lean'd upon his arm.

4 In pray'r my soul drew near the Lord,
And saw his glory shine;
And when I read his holy word,
I call'd each promise mine.

5 Then to his saints I often spoke,
Of what his love had done;
But now my heart is almost broke,
For all my joys are gone.

6 Now when the ev'ning shade prevails,
My soul in darkness mourns;
And when the morn the light reveals,
No light to me returns.

7 My pray'rs are now a chatt'ring noise,
For Jesus hides his face;
I read, the promise meets my eyes,
But will not reach my case.

8 Now Satan threatens to prevail,
And make my soul his prey:
Yet, Lord, thy mercies cannotf il,
O come without delay!

XLIV. *The Change.* *

1 SAVIOUR, shine and cheer my soul,
Bid my dying hopes revive;
Make my wounded spirit whole,
Far away the tempter drive:
Speak the word, and set me free,
Let me live alone to thee.

2 Shall I sigh and pray in vain,
Wilt thou still refuse to hear?
Wilt thou not return again,
Must I yield to black despair?
Thou hast taught my heart to pray,
Canst thou turn thy face away?

3 Once I thought my mountain strong,
Firmly fix'd no more to move;
Then thy grace was all my song,
Then my soul was fill'd with love;
Those were happy golden days,
Sweetly spent in pray'r and praise.

4 When my friends have said, "Beware,
"Soon or late you'll find a change;"
I could see no cause for fear,
Vain their caution seem'd and strange:
Not a cloud obscur'd my sky,
Could I think a tempest nigh?

* Book ii. Hymn 34. and Book iii. Hymn 86.

5 Little then myself I knew,
Little thought of Satan's pow'r:
Now I find their words were true,
Now I feel the stormy hour!
Sin has put my joys to flight,
Sin has chang'd my day to night.

6 Satan asks and mocks my woe,
"Boaster, where is now your God?"
Silence, Lord, this cruel foe,
Let him know I'm bought with blood:
Tell him, since I know thy name,
Though I change, thou art the same.

PSALMS.

XLV. *Pleading for Mercy.* Psal. vi.

1 In mercy, not in wrath, rebuke
Thy feeble worm, my God!
My spirit dreads thine angry look,
And trembles at thy rod.

2 Have mercy, Lord, for I am weak,
Regard my heavy groans:
O let thy voice of comfort speak,
And heal my broken bones!

3 By day, my busy beating head
Is fill'd with anxious fears;
By night upon my restless bed,
I weep a flood of tears.

4 Thus I sit desolate and mourn,
Mine eyes grow dull with grief:
How long, my Lord, ere thou return,
And bring my soul relief?

5 O come and show thy pow'r to save,
And spare my fainting breath;
For who can praise thee in the grave,
Or sing thy name in death?

6 Satan, my cruel envious foe,
Insults me in my pain;
He smiles to see me brought so low,
And tells me hope is vain.

7 But hence, thou enemy, depart,
Nor tempt me to despair;
My Saviour comes to cheer my heart,
The Lord has heard my pray'r.

XLVI. *None upon Earth I desire beside thee.*
Psal. lxxiii. 25.

1 How tedious and tasteless the hours,
When Jesus no longer I see;
Sweet prospects, sweet birds, and sweet flow'rs,
Have lost all their sweetness with me;
The midsummer sun shines but dim,
The fields strive in vain to look gay;
But when I am happy in him,
December's as pleasant as May.

2 His name yields the richest perfume,
And sweeter than music his voice;
His presence disperses my gloom,
And makes all within me rejoice:
I should, were he always thus nigh,
Have nothing to wish or to fear;
No mortal so happy as I,
My summer would last all the year.

3 Content with beholding his face,
My all to his pleasure resign'd;
No changes of season or place
Would make any change in my mind:
While bless'd with a sense of his love,
A palace a toy would appear;
And prisons would palaces prove,
If Jesus would dwell with me there.

4 Dear Lord, if indeed I am thine,
If thou art my sun and my song;
Say, why do I languish and pine,
And why are my winters so long?
O drive these dark clouds from my sky,
Thy soul-cheering presence restore;
Or take me unto thee on high,
Where winter and clouds are no more.

XLVII. *The Believer's Safety.* Psal. xci.

1 Incarnate God! the soul that knows
Thy name's mysterious pow'r,
Shall dwell in undisturb'd repose,
Nor fear the trying hour.

2 Thy wisdom, faithfulness, and love,
To feeble helpless worms,
A buckler and a refuge prove
From enemies and storms.

3 In vain the fowler spreads his net,
To draw them from thy care;
Thy timely call instructs their feet
To shun the artful snare.

4 They often murmur'd by the way,
Because they judg'd by sight:
But were at length constrain'd to say,
The Lord had led them right.

5 In the Red Sea, that stopp'd them first,
Their enemies were drown'd;
The rocks gave water for their thirst,
And manna spread the ground.

6 By fire and cloud their way was shown
Across the pathless sands;
And Amalek was overthrown
By Moses' lifted hands.

7 The way was right their hearts to prove,
To make God's glory known;
And show his wisdom, pow'r, and love,
Engag'd to save his own.

8 Just so the true believer's path,
Through many dangers lies;
Though dark to sense, 'tis right to faith,
And leads us to the skies.

L. *What shall I render?** Psal. cxvi. 12, 13.

1 For mercies, countless as the sands,
Which daily I receive
From Jesus my Redeemer's hands,
My soul, what canst thou give?

2 Alas! from such a heart as mine,
What can I bring him forth?
My best is stain'd and dy'd with sin,
My all is nothing worth.

* Book iii. Hymn 67.

3 Yet this acknowledgement I'll make
For all he has bestow'd,
Salvation's sacred cup I'll take,
And call upon my God.

4 The best returns for one like me,
So wretched and so poor,
Is from his gifts to draw a plea,
And ask him still for more.

5 I cannot serve him as I ought,
No works have I to boast;
Yet would I glory in the thought
That I shall owe him most.

LI. *Dwelling in Meseoh.* Psal. cxx. 5—7.

1 What a mournful life is mine,
Fill'd with crosses, pains, and cares!
Ev'ry work defil'd with sin,
Ev'ry step beset with snares!

2 If alone I pensive sit,
I myself can hardly bear;
If I pass along the street,
Sin and riot triumph there.

3 Jesus! how my heart is pain'd,
How it mourns for souls deceiv'd,
When I hear thy name profan'd,
When I see thy Spirit griev'd!

4 When thy children's griefs I view,
Their distress becomes my own;
All I hear, or see, or do,
Makes me tremble, weep, and groan.

5 Mourning thus I long had been,
When I heard my Saviour's voice;
"Thou hast cause to mourn for sin,
"But in me thou may'st rejoice."

6 This kind word dispell'd my grief,
Put to silence my complaints;
Though of sinners I am chief,
He has rank'd me with his saints.

7 Though constrain'd to dwell a while
Where the wicked strive and brawl;
Let them frown, so he but smile,
Heav'n will make amends for all.

8 There, believers, we shall rest,
Free from sorrow, sin, and fears;
Nothing there our peace molest,
Through eternal rounds of years.

9 Let us then the fight endure,
See our Captain looking down;
He will make the conquest sure,
And bestow the promis'd crown.

PROVERBS.

LII. C. *Wisdom.* Chap. viii. 22—31.

1 Ere God had built the mountains,
Or rais'd the fruitful hills;
Before he fill'd the fountains
That feed the running rills;
In me, from everlasting,
The wonderful I am,
Found pleasures never wasting,
And Wisdom is my name.

2 When, like a tent to dwell in,
He spread the skies abroad,
And swath'd about the swelling
Of ocean's mighty flood;
He wrought by weight and measure,
And I was with him then;
Myself the Father's pleasure,
And mine, the sons of men.

3 Thus wisdom's words discover
Thy glory and thy grace,
Thou everlasting lover
Of our unworthy race!
Thy gracious eye survey'd us
Ere stars were seen above;
In wisdom thou hast made us,
And died for us in love.

4 And could'st thou be delighted
With creatures such as we,
Who, when we saw thee, slighted,
And nail'd thee to the tree?
Unfathomable wonder,
And mystery divine!
The voice that speaks in thunder,
Says, "Sinner, I am thine!"

LIII. *A Friend that sticketh closer than a Brother.* Chap. xviii. 24.

1 One there is above all others,
Well deserves the name of Friend;
His is love beyond a brother's,
Costly, free, and knows no end:
They who once his kindness prove
Find it everlasting love!

2 Which of all our friends to save us,
Could or would have shed their blood!
But our Jesus died to have us
Reconcil'd in him to God:
This was boundless love indeed!
Jesus is a Friend in need.

3 Men, when rais'd to lofty stations,
Often know their friends no more;
Slight and scorn their poor relations,
Though they valu'd them before:
But our Saviour always owns
Those whom he redeem'd with groans.

4 When he liv'd on earth abased,
Friend of sinners was his name;
Now, above all glory raised,
He rejoices in the same:
Still he calls them brethren, friends,
And to all their wants attends.

5 Could we bear from one another
What he daily bears from us?
Yet this glorious Friend and Brother
Loves us though we treat him thus:
Though for good we render ill,
He accounts us brethren still.

6 Oh! for grace our hearts to soften!
Teach us, Lord, at length to love;
We, alas! forget too often
What a Friend we have above:
But when home our souls are brought,
We will love thee as we ought.

ECCLESIASTES.

LIV. *Vanity of Life.** Chap. i. 2.

1 The evils that beset our path
Who can prevent or cure?
We stand upon the brink of death
When most we seem secure.

2 If we to-day sweet peace possess,
It soon may be withdrawn;
Some change may plunge us in distress,
Before to-morrow's dawn.

3 Disease and pain invade our health,
And find an easy prey;
And oft, when least expected, wealth
Takes wings and flies away.

4 A fever or a blow can shake
Our wisdom's boasted rule,
And of the brightest genius make
A madman or a fool.

5 The gourds, from which we look for fruit,
Produce us only pain;
A worm unseen attacks the root,
And all our hopes are vain.

6 I pity those who seek no more
Than such a world can give;
Wretched they are, and blind, and poor,
And dying while they live.

7 Since sin has fill'd the earth with woe,
And creatures fade and die;
Lord, wean our hearts from things below,
And fix our hopes on high.

* Book ii. Hymn 6.

LV. C. *Vanity of the World.*

1 God gives his mercies to be spent;
Your hoard will do your soul no good;
Gold is a blessing only lent,
Repaid by giving others food.

2 The world's esteem is but a bribe,
To buy their peace you sell your own;
The slave of a vain-glorious tribe,
Who hate you while they make you known.

3 The joy that vain amusements give,
Oh! sad conclusion that it brings!
The honey of a crowded hive,
Defended by a thousand stings.

4 'Tis thus the world rewards the fools
That live upon her treach'rous smiles;
She leads them blindfold by her rules,
And ruins all whom she beguiles.

5 God knows the thousands who go down
From pleasure into endless woe;
And with a long despairing groan
Blaspheme their Maker as they go.

6 O fearful thought! be timely wise;
Delight but in a Saviour's charms,
And God shall take you to the skies,
Embrac'd in everlasting arms.

LVI. *Vanity of the Creature sanctified.*

1 Honey though the bee prepares,
An envenom'd sting he wears;
Piercing thorns a guard compose
Round the fragrant, blooming rose.

2 Where we think to find a sweet,
Oft a painful sting we meet:
When the rose invites our eye,
We forget the thorn is nigh.

3 Why are thus our hopes beguil'd?
Why are all our pleasures spoil'd?
Why do agony and woe
From our choicest comforts grow?

4 Sin has been the cause of all!
'Twas not thus before the fall:
What but pain, and thorn, and sting,
From the root of sin can spring?

5 Now with ev'ry good we find
Vanity and grief entwin'd;
What we feel, or what we fear,
All our joys imbitter here.

6 Yet, through the Redeemer's love,
These afflictions blessings prove;
He the wounding stings and thorns
Into healing med'cines turns.

7 From the earth our hearts they wean,
Teach us on his arm to lean;
Urge us to a throne of grace,
Make us seek a resting place.

8 In the mansions of our King
Sweets abound without a sting;
Thornless there the roses blow,
And the joys unmingled flow.

SOLOMON'S SONG.

LVII. *The name of Jesus.* Chap. i. 3.

1 How sweet the name of Jesus sounds
In a believer's ear!
It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds,
And drives away his fear.

2 It makes the wounded spirit whole,
And calms the troubled breast;
'Tis manna to the hungry soul,
And to the weary rest.

3 Dear name! the rock on which I build,
My shield and hiding place;
My never-failing treasury fill'd
With boundless stores of grace.

4 By thee my pray'rs acceptance gain,
Although with sin defil'd;
Satan accuses me in vain,
And I am own'd a child.

5 Jesus! my Shepherd, Husband, Friend,
My Prophet, Priest, and King;
My Lord, my Life, my Way, my End,
Accept the praise I bring.

6 Weak is the effort of my heart,
And cold my warmest thought;
But when I see thee as thou art,
I'll praise thee as I ought.

7 'Till then I would thy love proclaim
With ev'ry fleeting breath;
And may the music of thy name
Refresh my soul in death.

ISAIAH.

LVIII. C. *O Lord, I will praise thee.* Chap. xii.

1 I will praise thee ev'ry day,
Now thine anger's turn'd away!
Comfortable thoughts arise
From the bleeding sacrifice.

2 Here, in the fair Gospel-field,
Wells of free salvation yield
Streams of life, a plenteous store,
And my soul shall thirst no more.

3 Jesus is become at length
My salvation and my strength;
And his praises shall prolong,
While I live, my pleasant song.

4 Praise ye then his glorious name,
Publish his exalted fame!
Still his worth your praise exceeds,
Excellent are all his deeds.

5 Raise again the joyful sound,
Let the nations roll it round!
Zion shout, for this is he,
God the Saviour dwells in thee!

LIX. *The Refuge, River, and Rock of the Church.* Chap. xxxii. 2.

1 He who on earth as man was known,
And bore our sins and pains;
Now seated on th' eternal throne,
The God of glory reigns.

2 His hands the wheels of nature guide
With an unerring skill;
And countless worlds, extended wide,
Obey his sov'reign will.

3 While harps unnumber'd sound his praise,
In yonder world above;
His saints on earth admire his ways,
And glory in his love.

4 His righteousness, to faith reveal'd,
Wrought out for guilty worms,
Affords a hiding-place and shield
From enemies and storms.

5 This land, through which his pilgrims go,
Is desolate and dry;
But streams of grace from him o'erflow,
Their thirst to satisfy.

6 When troubles, like a burning sun,
Beat heavy on their head,
To this almighty Rock they run,
And find a pleasing shade.

7 How glorious he! how happy they
In such a glorious Friend!
Whose love secures them all the way,
And crowns them at the end.

LX. *Zion, or the City of God.** Chap. xxxiii. 20, 21.

1 Glorious things of thee are spoken,†
Zion, city of our God!
He, whose word cannot be broken,
Form'd thee for his own abode:‡
On the rock of ages founded,§
What can shake thy sure repose?
With salvation's walls surrounded,‖
Thou mayst smile at all thy foes.

* Book ii. Hymn 24. † Psa. lxxxvii. 3. ‡ Psa. cxxxii. 14.
§ Matt. xvi. 18. ‖ Isa. xxvi. 1.

2 See the streams of living waters
Springing from eternal love,*
Well supply thy sons and daughters,
And all fear of want remove:
Who can faint while such a river
Ever flows their thrist t' assuage?
Grace which, like the Lord, the giver,
Never fails from age to age.

3 Round each habitation hov'ring,
See the cloud and fire appear!†
For a glory and a cov'ring,
Showing that the Lord is near:
Thus deriving from their banner
Light by night and shade by day;
Safe they feed upon the manna
Which he gives them when they pray.

4 Blest inhabitants of Zion,
Wash'd in the Redeemer's blood!
Jesus, whom their souls rely on,
Makes them kings and priests to God:‡
'Tis his love his people raises
Over self to reign as kings,
And as priests, his solemn praises
Each for a thank-off'ring brings.

5 Saviour, if of Zion's city
I, through grace, a member am;
Let the world deride or pity,
I will glory in thy name:
Fading is the worldling's pleasure,
All his boasted pomp and show;
Solid joys and lasting treasure,
None but Zion's children know.

* Psal. xlvi. 4. † Isa. iv. 5, 6. ‡ Rev. i. 6.

LXI. *Look unto me, and be ye saved.* Chap. xlv. 22.

1 As the serpent rais'd by Moses*
Heal'd the burning serpent's bite;
Jesus thus himself discloses
To the wounded sinner's sight:
Hear his gracious invitation,
"I have life and peace to give,
"I have wrought out full salvation,
"Sinner, look to me and live.

2 "Pore upon your sins no longer,
"Well I know their mighty guilt;
"But my love than death is stronger,
"I my blood have freely spilt:
"Though your heart has long been harden'd,
"Look on me—it soft shall grow;
"Past transgressions shall be pardon'd,
"And I'll wash you white as snow.

3 "I have seen what you were doing,
"Though you little thought of me;
"You were madly bent on ruin,
"But, I said,—It shall not be:
"You had been for ever wretched,
"Had I not espous'd your part;
"Now behold my arms outstretched
"To receive you to my heart.

4 "Well may shame, and joy, and wonder,
"All your inward passions move;
"I could crush thee with my thunder,
"But I speak to thee in love:

* Numb. xxi. 9.

"See! your sins are all forgiv'n,
"I have paid the countless sum!
"Now my death has open'd heav'n,
"Thither you shall shortly come."

5 Dearest Saviour, we adore thee
For thy precious life and death;
Melt each stubborn heart before thee,
Give us all the eye of faith:
From the law's condemning sentence,
To thy mercy we appeal;
Thou alone canst give repentance,
Thou alone our souls canst heal.

LXII. *The good Physician.*

1 How lost was my condition,
Till Jesus made me whole!
There is but one Physician
Can cure a sin-sick soul!
Next door to death he found me,
And snatch'd me from the grave,
To tell to all around me,
His wond'rous pow'r to save.

2 The worst of all diseases
Is light, compar'd with sin;
On ev'ry part it seizes,
But rages most within:
'Tis palsy, plague, and fever,
And madness, all combin'd;
And none but a believer
The least relief can find.

3 From men great skill professing
I thought a cure to gain;
But this prov'd more distressing,
And added to my pain:
Some said that nothing ail'd me,
Some gave me up for lost;
Thus ev'ry refuge fail'd me,
And all my hopes were cross'd.

4 At length this great Physician,
How matchless is his grace!
Accepted my petition,
And undertook my case:
First gave me sight to view him,
For sin my eyes had seal'd;
Then bid me look unto him;
I look'd, and I was heal'd.

5 A dying, risen Jesus,
Seen by the eye of faith,
At once from danger frees us,
And saves the soul from death:
Come then to this Physician,
His help he'll freely give,
He makes no hard condition,
'Tis only—look and live.

LXIII. *To the Afflicted, tossed with tempests, and not comforted.* Chap. liv. 5—11.

1 Pensive, doubting, fearful heart,
Hear what Christ the Saviour says;
Ev'ry word should joy impart,
Change thy mourning into praise:

Yes, he speaks, and speaks to thee,
May he help thee to believe!
Then thou presently wilt see,
Thou hast little cause to grieve.

2 "Fear thou not, nor be asham'd,
"All thy sorrows soon shall end:
"I who heav'n and earth have fram'd
"Am thy husband and thy friend:
"I the High and Holy One,
"Israel's God, by all ador'd,
"As thy Saviour will be known,
"Thy Redeemer and thy Lord.

3 "For a moment I withdrew,
"And thy heart was fill'd with pain;
"But my mercies I'll renew,
"Thou shalt soon rejoice again:
"Though I seem to hide my face,
"Very soon my wrath shall cease;
"'Tis but for a moment's space,
"Ending in eternal peace.

4 "When my peaceful bow appears, *
"Painted on the wat'ry cloud;
"'Tis to dissipate thy fears,
"Lest the earth should be o'erflow'd:
"'Tis an emblem too of grace,
"Of my cov'nant-love a sign:
"Though the mountains leave their place,
"Thou shalt be for ever mine.

5 "Though afflicted, tempest-toss'd,
"Comfortless a while thou art,
"Do not think thou canst be lost,
"Thou art graven on my heart:

* Gen. ix. 13, 14.

"All thy wastes I will repair,
"Thou shalt be rebuilt anew;
"And in thee it shall appear
"What a God of love can do."

LXIV. C. *The Contrite Heart.* Chap. lvii. 15.

1 The Lord will happiness divine
On contrite hearts bestow;
Then tell me, gracious God, is mine
A contrite heart or no?

2 I hear, but seem to hear in vain,
Insensible as steel;
If ought is felt, 'tis only pain,
To find I cannot feel.

3 I sometimes think myself inclin'd
To love thee if I could;
But often feel another mind,
Averse to all that's good.

4 My best desires are faint and few,
I fain would strive for more;
But when I cry, "My strength renew,"
Seem weaker than before.

4 Thy saints are comforted, I know,
And love thy house of pray'r;
I therefore go where others go,
But find no comfort there.

6 O make this heart rejoice or ache;
Decide this doubt for me;
And if it be not broken, break,
And heal it, if it be.

LXV. C. *The future Peace and Glory of the Church.*
Chap. lx. 15—20.

1 HEAR what God the Lord hath spoken,
"O my people, faint and few,
"Comfortless, afflicted, broken,
"Fair abodes I build for you;
"Themes of heart-felt tribulation
"Shall no more perplex your ways:
"You shall name your walls, Salvation,
"And your gates shall all be praise.

2 "There, like streams that feed the garden,
"Pleasures without end shall flow;
"For the Lord, your faith rewarding,
"All his bounty shall bestow:
"Still in undisturb'd possession,
"Peace and righteousness shall reign;
"Never shall you feel oppression,
"Hear the voice of war again.

3 "Ye no more your suns descending,
"Waning moons no more shall see;
"But, your griefs for ever ending,
"Find eternal noon in me:
"God shall rise, and shining o'er you,
"Change to day the gloom of night:
"He, the Lord, shall be your glory,
"God your everlasting light."

JEREMIAH.

LXVI. *Trust of the Wicked and the Righteous compared.* Chap. xvii. 5—8.

1 As parched in the barren sands,
Beneath a burning sky,
The worthless bramble with'ring stands,
And only grows to die.

2 Such is the sinner's awful case,
Who makes the world his trust,
And dares his confidence to place
In vanity and dust.

3 A secret curse destroys his root,
And dries his moisture up;
He lives a while, but bears no fruit,
Then dies without a hope.

4 But happy he whose hopes depend
Upon the Lord alone;
The soul that trusts in such a Friend,
Can ne'er be overthrown.

5 Though gourds should wither, cisterns break,
And creature-comforts die,
No change his solid hope can shake,
Or stop his sure supply.

6 So thrives and blooms the tree whose roots
By constant streams are fed;
Array'd in green, and rich in fruits,
It rears its branching head.

7 It thrives though rain should be deny'd,
And drought around prevail;
'Tis planted by a river side,
Whose waters cannot fail.

LXVII. C. *Jehovah our Righteousness.* Chap. xxiii. 6.

1 My God, how perfect are thy ways!
But mine polluted are;
Sin twines itself about my praise,
And slides into my prayer.

2 When I would speak what thou hast done
To save me from my sin,
I cannot make thy mercies known,
But self-applause creeps in.

3 Divine desire, that holy flame
Thy grace creates in me;
Alas! impatience is its name,
When it returns to thee.

4 This heart, a fountain of vile thoughts,
How does it overflow!
While self upon the surface floats,
Still bubbling from below.

5 Let others in the gaudy dress
Of fancied merit shine,
The Lord shall be my righteousness,
The Lord for ever mine.

LXVIII. C. *Ephraim repenting.* Chap. xxxi. 18—20.

1 My God, till I receiv'd thy stroke,
How like a beast was I!
So unaccustom'd to the yoke,
So backward to comply.

2 With grief my just reproach I bear,
Shame fills me at the thought;
How frequent my rebellions were!
What wickedness I wrought!

3 Thy merciful restraint I scorn'd,
And left the pleasant road;
Yet turn me, and I shall be turn'd,
Thou art the Lord my God.

4 "Is Ephraim banish'd from my thoughts,
"Or vile in my esteem?
"No," saith the Lord, "with all his faults
"I still remember him.

5 "Is he a dear and pleasant child?
"Yes, dear and pleasant still;
"Though sin his foolish heart beguil'd,
"And he withstood my will.

6 "My sharp rebuke his laid him low,
"He seeks my face again;
"My pity kindles at his woe,
"He shall not seek in vain."

LAMENTATIONS.

LXIX. *The Lord is my Portion.* Chap. iii. 24.

1 From pole to pole let others roam,
And search in vain for bliss;
My soul is satisfied at home,
The Lord my portion is.

2 Jesus, who on his glorious throne
Rules heav'n, and earth, and sea,
Is pleas'd to claim me for his own,
And give himself to me.

3 His person fixes all my love,
His blood removes my fear;
And while he pleads for me above,
His arm preserves me here.

4 His word of promise is my food,
His Spirit is my guide;
Thus daily is my strength renew'd,
And all my wants supply'd. *

5 For him I count as gain each loss,
Disgrace, for him, renown;
Well may I glory in his cross,
While he prepares my crown!

6 Let worldlings then indulge their boast,
How much they gain or spend;
Their joys must soon give up the ghost,
But mine shall know no end.

EZEKIEL.

LXX. *Humbled and silenced by Mercy.* Chap. xvi. 63.

1 Once perishing in blood I lay,
Creatures no help could give;
But Jesus pass'd me in the way,
He saw, and bid me live.

2 Though Satan still his rule maintain'd,
And all his arts employ'd;
That mighty word his rage restrain'd,
I could not be destroy'd.

3 At length the time of love arriv'd
When I my Lord should know;
Then Satan, of his pow'r depriv'd,
Was forc'd to let me go.

4 O can I e'er that day forget,
When Jesus kindly spoke!
"Poor soul, my blood has paid thy debt,
"And now I break thy yoke.

* Book iii. Hymn 59.

DANIEL.

LXXIII. *The Power and Triumph of Faith.* Chap. iii. 6.

1 Supported by the word,
Though in himself a worm,
The servant of the Lord
Can wondrous acts perform:
Without dismay he boldly treads
Where'er the path of duty leads.

2 The haughty king in vain,
With fury on his brow,
Believers would constrain
To golden gods to bow:
The furnace could not make them fear,
Because they knew the Lord was near.

3 As vain was the decree
Which charg'd them not to pray;
Daniel still bow'd his knee,
And worshipp'd thrice a day.
Trusting in God, he fear'd not men,
Though threaten'd with the lions' den.

4 Secure they might refuse
Compliance with such laws;
For what had they to lose,
When God espous'd their cause?
He made the hungry lions crouch;
Nor durst the fire his children touch.

5 The Lord is still the same,
A mighty shield and tow'r,
And they who trust his name
Are guarded by his pow'r:
He can the rage of lions tame,
And bear them harmless through the flame.

6 Yet we too often shrink
When trials are in view;
Expecting we must sink
And never can get through:
But could we once believe indeed,
From all these fears we should be freed.

LXXIV. *Belshazzar.* Chap. v. 5, 6.

1 Poor sinners; little do they think
With whom they have to do!
But stand securely on the brink
Of everlasting woe.

2 Belshazzar thus, profanely bold,
The Lord of hosts defy'd;
But vengeance soon his boasts controll'd,
And humbled all his pride.

3 He saw a hand upon the wall
(And trembled on his throne)
Which wrote his sudden dreadful fall
In characters unknown.

4 Why should he tremble at the view
Of what he could not read?
Foreboding conscience quickly knew
His ruin was decreed.

5 See him o'erwhelm'd with deep distress!
His eyes with anguish roll;
His looks and loosen'd joints express
The terrors of his soul.

6 His pomp and music, guests and wine,
No more delight afford:
Oh sinner! ere this case be thine,
Begin to seek the Lord.

7 The law, like this hand-writing, stands,
And speaks the wrath of God;*
But Jesus answers its demands,
And cancels it with blood.

JONAH.

LXXV. *The Gourd.* Chap. iv. 7.

1 As once for Jonah, so the Lord,
To soothe and cheer my mournful hours,
Prepar'd for me a pleasing gourd,
Cool was its shade, and sweet its flow'rs.

2 To prize his gift was surely right;
But through the folly of my heart,
It hid the Giver from my sight,
And soon my joy was chang'd to smart.

3 While I admir'd its beauteous form,
Its pleasant shade and grateful fruit;
The Lord, displeas'd, sent forth a worm,
Unseen, to prey upon the root.

4 I trembled when I saw it fade,
But guilt restrain'd the murm'ring word;
My folly I confess'd, and pray'd,
Forgive my sin, and spare my gourd.

5 His wondrous love can ne'er be told,
He heard me, and reliev'd my pain;
His word the threat'ning worm controll'd
And bid my gourd revive again.

6 Now, Lord, my gourd is mine no more,
'Tis thine, who only couldst it raise;
The idol of my heart before,
Henceforth shall flourish to thy praise.

* Col. ii. 14.

ZECHARIAH.

LXXVI. *Prayer for the Lord's promised Presence.*
Chap. ii. 10.

1 Son of God! thy people shield!
Must we still thine absence mourn,
Let thy promise be fulfill'd,
Thou hast said, "I will return."

2 Gracious Leader, now appear,
Shine upon us with thy light!
Like the spring, when thou art near,
Days and suns are doubly bright.

3 As a mother counts the days
Till her absent son she see,
Longs and watches, weeps and prays,
So our spirits long for thee.

4 Come, and let us feel thee nigh,
Then thy sheep shall feed in peace;
Plenty bless us from on high,
Evil from amongst us cease.

5 With thy love, and voice, and aid,
Thou canst ev'ry care assuage;
Then we shall not be afraid,
Though the world and Satan rage.

6 Thus each day for thee we'll spend,
While our callings we pursue;
And the thoughts of such a Friend
Shall each night our joy renew.

7 Let thy light be ne'er withdrawn,
Golden days afford us long!
Thus we pray at early dawn,
This shall be our ev'ning song.

LXXVII. *A Brand plucked out of the Fire.* Chap. iii. 1–5.

1 With Satan, my accuser, near,
My spirit trembled when I saw
The Lord in majesty appear,
And heard the language of his law.

2 In vain I wish'd and strove to hide
The tatter'd filthy rags I wore;
While my fierce foe insulting cry'd,
"See what you trusted in before!"

3 Struck dumb, and left without a plea,
I heard my gracious Saviour say,
"Know, Satan, I this sinner free,
"I died to take his sins away.

4 "This is a brand which I, in love,
"To save from wrath and sin design;
"In vain thy accusations prove;
"I answer all, and claim him mine."

5 At his rebuke the tempter fled;
Then he remov'd my filthy dress;
"Poor sinner, take this robe," he said,
"It is thy Saviour's righteousness.

6 "And see, a crown of life prepar'd!
"That I might thus thy head adorn;
"I thought no shame or suffering hard,
"But wore for thee a crown of thorn."

7 O how I heard these gracious words!
They broke and heal'd my heart at once;
Constrain'd me to become the Lord's,
And all my idol-gods renounce.

8 Now, Satan, thou hast lost thy aim,
Against this brand thy threats are vain;
Jesus has pluck'd it from the flame,
And who shall put it in again?

LXXVIII. *On one Stone shall be seven Eyes.* Chap. iii. 9.

1 JESUS Christ, the Lord's anointed,
Who his blood for sinners spilt,
Is the Stone by God appointed,
And the church is on him built:
He delivers all who trust him from their guilt.

2 Many eyes at once are fixed
On a person so divine;
Love, with awful justice mixed,
In his great redemption shine:
Mighty Jesus! give me leave to call thee mine.

3 By the Father's eye approved,
Lo, a voice is heard from heav'n,*
"Sinners, this is my beloved,
"For your ransom freely given:
"All offences, for his sake, shall be forgiven."

4 Angels with their eyes pursu'd him,†
When he left his glorious throne;
With astonishment they view'd him
Put the form of servant on:
Angels worshipp'd him who was on earth unknown.

5 Satan and his host amazed,
Saw this stone in Zion laid;
Jesus, though to death abased,
Bruis'd the subtle serpent's head,‡
When, to save us, on the cross his blood he shed.

* Matt. iii. 17. † 1 Tim. iii. 16. ‡ John, xii. 31.

6 When a guilty sinner sees him,
While he looks, his soul is heal'd;
Soon this sight from anguish frees him,
And imparts a pardon seal'd: *
May this Saviour be to all our hearts reveal'd.

7 With desire and admiration,
All his blood-bought flock behold;
Him who wrought out their salvation,
And enclos'd them in his fold: †
Yet their warmest love and praises are too cold.

8 By the eye of carnal reason
Many view him with disdain; ‡
How will they abide the season
When he'll come with all his train?
To escape him then they'll wish, but wish in vain.

9 How their hearts will melt and tremble
When they hear his awful voice; §
But his saints he'll then assemble,
As his portion and his choice,
And receive them to his everlasting joys.

LXXIX. C. *Praise for the Fountain opened.* Chap. xiii. 1.

1 There is a fountain fill'd with blood
Drawn from Immanuel's veins;
And sinners plung'd beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty stains.

2 The dying thief rejoic'd to see
That fountain in his day;
And there have I, as vile as he,
Wash'd all my sins away.

* John, iii. 15. † 1 Pet. ii. 7.
‡ Psal. cxviii. 22. § Rev. i. 7.

3 Dear dying Lamb, thy precious blood
Shall never lose its pow'r,
Till all the ransom'd church of God
Be sav'd to sin no more.

4 E'er since, by faith, I saw the stream
Thy flowing wounds supply,
Redeeming love has been my theme,
And shall be till I die.

5 Then in a nobler, sweeter song
I'll sing thy pow'r to save;
When this poor lisping, stamm'ring tongue
Lies silent in the grave.

6 Lord, I believe thou hast prepar'd
(Unworthy though I be)
For me a blood-bought free reward,
A golden harp for me!

7 'Tis strung and tun'd, for endless years,
And form'd by pow'r divine;
To sound in God the Father's ears
No other name but thine.

MALACHI.

LXXX. *They shall be mine, saith the Lord.* Chap. iii. 16—18.

1 When sinners utter boasting words,
And glory in their shame;
The Lord, well pleas'd, an ear affords
To those who fear his name.

2 They often meet to seek his face,
And what they do, or say,
Is noted in his book of grace
Against another day.

3 For they by faith a day descry,
And joyfully expect,
When he, descending from the sky,
His jewels will collect.

4 Unnotic'd now, because unknown,
A poor and suff'ring few;
He comes to claim them for his own,
And bring them forth to view.

5 With transport then their Saviour's care
And favour they shall prove;
As tender parents guard and spare
The children of their love.

6 Assembled worlds will then discern
The saints alone are blest;
When wrath shall like an oven burn,
And vengeance strike the rest.

MATTHEW.

LXXXI. *The Beggar.* Chap. vii. 7, 8.

1 Encourag'd by thy word
Of promise to the poor,
Behold a beggar, Lord,
Waits at thy mercy's door!
No hand, no heart, O Lord, but thine,
Can help or pity wants like mine.

2 The beggar's usual plea,
Relief from men to gain,
If offer'd unto thee,
I know thou wouldst disdain;
And pleas which move thy gracious ear,
Are such as men would scorn to hear.

3 I have no right to say,
That though I now am poor,
Yet once there was a day
When I possessed more:
Thou know'st that from my very birth,
I've been the poorest wretch on earth.

4 Nor can I dare profess,
As beggars often do,
Though great is my distress,
My wants have been but few:
If thou shouldst leave my soul to starve,
It would be what I well deserve.

5 'Twere folly to pretend
I never begg'd before;
Or if thou now befriend,
I'll trouble thee no more:
Thou often hast reliev'd my pain,
And often I must come again.

6 Though crumbs are much too good
For such a dog as I,
No less than children's food
My soul can satisfy;
O do not frown and bid me go,
I must have all thou canst bestow.

7 Nor can I willing be
Thy bounty to conceal
From others who, like me,
Their wants and hunger feel:
I'll tell them of thy mercy's store,
And try to send a thousand more.

8 Thy thoughts, thou only wise!
Our thoughts and ways transcend,
Far as the arched skies
Above the earth extend:*
Such pleas as mine men would not bear,
But God receives a beggar's pray'r.

LXXXII. *The Leper.* Chap. viii. 2, 3.

1 Oft as the leper's case I read,
My own describ'd I feel;
Sin is a leprosy indeed,
Which none but Christ can heal.

2 A while I would have pass'd for well,
And strove my spots to hide;
Till it broke out incurable,
Too plain to be deny'd.

3 Then from the saints I sought to flee,
And dreaded to be seen;
I thought they all would point at me,
And cry, "Unclean, unclean!"

4 What anguish did my soul endure,
Till hope and patience ceas'd!
The more I strove myself to cure,
The more the plague increas'd.

5 While thus I lay distress'd, I saw
The Saviour passing by;
To him, though fill'd with shame and awe,
I rais'd my mournful cry.

* Isa. lv. 8, 9.

6 Lord, thou canst heal me if thou wilt,
For thou canst all things do;
O cleanse my leprous soul from guilt,
My filthy heart renew!

7 He heard, and with a gracious look
Pronounc'd the healing word;
"I will—be clean," and while he spoke
I felt my health restor'd.

8 Come, lepers, seize the present hour,
The Saviour's grace to prove;
He can relieve, for he is pow'r,
He will, for he is love.

LXXXIII. *A sick Soul.* Chap. ix. 12.

1 PHYSICIAN of my sin-sick soul,
To thee I bring my case;
My raging malady control,
And heal me by thy grace.

2 Pity the anguish I endure,
See how I mourn and pine;
For never can I hope a cure
From any hand but thine.

3 I would disclose my whole complaint,
But where shall I begin?
No words of mine can fully paint
That worst distemper, sin.

4 It lies not in a single part,
But through my frame is spread;
A burning fever in my heart,
A palsy in my head.

5 It makes me deaf, and dumb, and blind,
And impotent, and lame;
And overclouds and fills my mind
With folly, fear, and shame.

6 A thousand evil thoughts intrude
Tumultuous in my breast;
Which indispose me for my food,
And rob me of my rest.

7 Lord, I am sick, regard my cry,
And set my spirit free:
Say, canst thou let a sinner die,
Who longs to live to thee?

LXXXIV. *Satan returning.* Chap. xii. 43—45.

1 When Jesus claims the sinner's heart,
Where Satan rul'd before;
The evil spirit must depart,
And dares return no more.

2 But when he goes without constraint,
And wanders from his home,
Although withdrawn, 'tis but a feint,
He means again to come.

3 Some outward change perhaps is seen
If Satan quit the place;
But though the house seem swept and clean,
'Tis destitute of grace.

4 Except the Saviour dwell and reign
Within the sinner's mind,
Satan, when he returns again,
Will easy entrance find.

5 With rage and malice sevenfold,
He then resumes his sway;
No more by checks to be controll'd,
No more to go away.

6 The sinner's former state was bad,
But worse the latter far;
He lives possessed, blind, and mad,
And dies in dark despair.

7 Lord, save me from this dreadful end!
And from this heart of mine,
O drive and keep away the fiend
Who fears no voice but thine.

LXXXV. C. *The Sower.* Chap. xiii. 3.

1 Ye sons of earth, prepare the plough,
Break up your fallow ground;
The sower is gone forth to sow,
And scatter blessings round.

2 The seed that finds a stony soil
Shoots forth a hasty blade;
But ill repays the sower's toil,
Soon wither'd, scorch'd, and dead.

3 The thorny ground is sure to balk
All hopes of harvest there:
We find a tall and sickly stalk,
But not the fruitful ear.

4 The beaten path and highway side
Receive the trust in vain;
The watchful birds the spoil divide,
And pick up all the grain.

5 But where the Lord of grace and pow'r
Has bless'd the happy field;
How plenteous is the golden store
The deep-wrought furrows yield!

6 Father of mercies, we have need
Of thy preparing grace;
Let the same hand that gives the seed
Provide a fruitful place.

LXXXVI. *The Wheat and Tares.* Chap. xiii. 37—42.

1 Though in the outward church below
The wheat and tares together grow,
Jesus ere long will weed the crop,
And pluck the tares, in anger, up.

2 Will it relieve their horrors there,
To recollect their stations here?
How much they heard, how much they knew,
How long amongst the wheat they grew?

3 Oh! this will aggravate their case!
They perish'd under means of grace;
To them the word of life and faith
Became an instrument of death.

4 We seem alike when thus we meet,
Strangers might think we all are wheat;
But to the Lord's all-searching eyes
Each heart appears without disguise.

5 The tares are spar'd for various ends;
Some for the sake of praying friends;
Others, the Lord, against their will,
Employs his counsels to fulfil.

6 But though they grow so tall and strong,
His plan will not require them long;
In harvest, when he saves his own,
The tares shall into hell be thrown.

LXXXVII. *Peter walking upon the Water.* Chap. xiv. 28—31.

1 A WORD from Jesus calms the sea,
The stormy wind controls,
And gives repose and liberty
To tempest-tossed souls.

2 To Peter on the waves he came,
And gave him instant peace;
Thus he to me reveal'd his name,
And bid my sorrows cease.

3 Then fill'd with wonder, joy, and love,
Peter's request was mine;
"Lord, call me down, I long to prove
"That I am wholly thine.

4 "Unmov'd at all I have to meet
"On life's tempestuous sea,
"Hard shall be easy, bitter sweet,
"So I may follow thee."

5 He heard and smil'd, and bid me try;
I eagerly obey'd;
But when from him I turn'd my eye,
How was my soul dismay'd!

6 The storm increas'd on ev'ry side,
I felt my spirit shrink;
And soon, with Peter, loud I cry'd,
"Lord, save me, or I sink."

7 Kindly he caught me by the hand,
And said, "Why dost thou fear,
"Since thou art come at my command,
"And I am always near?

8 "Upon my promise rest thy hope,
"And keep my love in view;
"I stand engag'd to hold thee up,
"And guide thee safely through."

LXXXVIII. *Woman of Canaan.* Chap. xv. 22—28.

1 Pray'r an answer will obtain,
Though the Lord a while delay;
None shall seek his face in vain,
None be empty sent away.

2 When the woman came from Tyre,
And for help to Jesus sought;
Though he granted her desire,
Yet at first he answer'd not.

3 Could she guess at his intent
When he to his follow'rs said,
"I to Israel's sheep am sent,
"Dogs must not have children's bread."

4 She was not of Israel's seed,
But of Canaan's wretched race;
Thought herself a dog indeed:
Was not this a hopeless case?

5 Yet although from Canaan sprung,
Though a dog herself she styl'd,
She had Israel's faith and tongue,
And was own'd for Abr'ham's child.

6 From his words she draws a plea:
"Though unworthy children's bread,
"'Tis enough for one like me,
"If with crumbs I may be fed."

7 Jesus then his heart reveal'd:
"Woman, canst thou thus believe?
"I to thy petition yield;
"All that thou canst wish, receive."

8 'Tis a pattern set for us,
How we ought to wait and pray;
None who plead and wrestle thus
Shall be empty sent away.

LXXXIX. *What think ye of Christ?* Chap. xxii. 42.

1 WHAT think you of Christ? is the test,
To try both your state and your scheme;
You cannot be right in the rest,
Unless you think rightly of him.
As Jesus appears in your view,
As he is beloved or not;
So God is disposed to you,
And mercy or wrath are your lot.

2 Some take him a creature to be,
A man, or an angel at most:
Sure these have not feelings like me,
Nor know themselves wretched and lost.
So guilty, so helpless am I,
I durst not confide in his blood,
Nor on his protection rely,
Unless I were sure he is God.

3 Some call him Saviour, in word,
But mix their own works with his plan;
And hope he his help will afford,
When they have done all that they can:
If doings prove rather too light,
(A little, they own, they may fail),
They purpose to make up full weight,
By casting his name in the scale.

4 Some style him the pearl of great price,
And say he's the fountain of joys;
Yet feed upon folly and vice,
And cleave to the world and its toys;
Like Judas, the Saviour they kiss,
And while they salute him, betray;
Ah! what will profession like this
Avail in his terrible day?

5 If ask'd, what of Jesus I think,
Though still my best thoughts are but poor,
I say, he's my meat and my drink,
My life, and my strength, and my store;
My Shepherd, my Husband, my Friend,
My Saviour from sin and from thrall;
My hope from beginning to end,
My portion, my Lord, and my All.

XC. *The foolish Virgins.** Chap. xxv. 1.

1 When, descending from the sky,
The Bridegroom shall appear,
And the solemn midnight cry
Shall call professors near.

* Book iii. Hymn 72.

How the sound our hearts will damp!
How will shame o'erspread each face!
If we only have a lamp,
Without the oil of grace.

2 Foolish virgins then will wake,
And seek for a supply;
But in vain the pains they take
To borrow or to buy:
Then with those they now despise,
Earnestly they'll wish to share:
But the best among the wise
Will have no oil to spare.

3 Wise are they, and truly blest,
Who then shall ready be!
But despair will seize the rest,
And dreadful misery:
Once they'll cry, we scorn'd to doubt,
Though in lies our trust we put;
Now our lamp of hope is out,
The door of mercy shut.

4 If they then presume to plead,
"Lord, open to us now;
"We on earth have heard and pray'd,
"And with thy saints did bow:"
He will answer from his throne,
"Though you with my people mix'd,
"Yet to me you ne'er were known;
"Depart, your doom is fix'd."

5 O that none who worship here
May hear that word "Depart!"
Lord, impress a godly fear
On each professor's heart;

Help us, Lord, to search the camp,
Let us not ourselves beguile!
Trusting to a dying lamp,
Without a stock of oil.

XCI. *Peter sinning and repenting.* Chap. xxvi. 75.

1 When Peter boasted, soon he fell,
Yet was by grace restor'd;
His case should be regarded well
By all who fear the Lord.

2 A voice it has, and helping hand,
Backsliders to recall;
And cautions those who think they stand,
Lest suddenly they fall.

3 He said, "Whatever others do,
"With Jesus I'll abide;"
Yet soon amidst a murd'rous crew
His suff'ring Lord deny'd.

4 He who had been so bold before,
Now trembled like a leaf;
Not only lied, but curs'd and swore,
To gain the more belief.

5 While he blasphem'd, he heard the cock,
And Jesus look'd in love;
At once, as if by lightning struck,
His tongue forbore to move.

6 Deliver'd thus from Satan's snare,
He starts, as from a sleep;
His Saviour's look he could not bear,
But hasted forth to weep.

7 But sure the faithful cock had crow'd
A hundred times in vain,
Had not the Lord that look bestow'd,
The meaning to explain.

8 As I, like Peter, vows have made,
Yet acted Peter's part;
So conscience, like the cock, upbraids
My base, ungrateful heart.

9 Lord Jesus, hear a sinner's cry,
My broken peace renew;
And grant one pitying look, that I
May weep with Peter too.

MARK.

XCII. *The Legion dispossessed.* Chap. v. 18, 19.

1 Legion was my name by nature,
Satan rag'd within my breast;
Never misery was greater,
Never sinner more possess'd:
Mischievous to all around me,
To myself the greatest foe;
Thus I was when Jesus found me,
Fill'd with madness, sin, and woe.

2 Yet in this forlorn condition,
When he came to set me free,
I reply'd to my Physician,
"What have I to do with thee?"
But he would not be prevented,
Rescu'd me against my will;
Had he staid till I consented,
I had been a captive still.

3 "Satan, though thou fain wouldst have it,
"Know, this soul is none of thine;
"I have shed my blood to save it,
"Now I challenge it for mine:*
"Though it long has thee resembled,
"Henceforth it shall me obey:"
Thus he spoke, while Satan trembled,
Gnash'd his teeth, and fled away.

4 Thus my frantic soul he healed,
Bid my sins and sorrows cease;
"Take," said he, "my pardon sealed,"
"I have sav'd thee, go in peace."
Rather take me, Lord, to heaven,
Now thy love and grace I know;
Since thou hast my sins forgiven,
Why should I remain below?

5 "Love," he said "will sweeten labours,
"Thou hast something yet to do;
"Go and tell your friends and neighbours,
"What my love has done for you:
"Live to manifest my glory,
"Wait for heaven a little space;
"Sinners, when they hear thy story,
"Will repent, and seek my face."

XCIII. *The Ruler's Daughter raised.* Chap. v. 39—42.

1 Could the creatures help or ease us,
Seldom should we think of pray'r;
Few, if any, come to Jesus,
Till reduc'd to self-despair:

* Book iii. Hymn 54.

Long we either slight or doubt him;
But when all the means we try
Prove we cannot do without him,
Then at last to him we cry.

2 Thus the ruler, when his daughter
Suffer'd much, though Christ was nigh,
Still deferr'd it, till he thought her
At the very point to die:
Though he mourn'd for her condition,
He did not intreat the Lord,
Till he found that no physician
But himself could help afford.

3 Jesus did not once upbraid him,
That he had no sooner come;
But a gracious answer made him,
And went straightway with him home:
Yet his faith was put to trial
When his servants came, and said,
"Though he gave thee no denial,
"'Tis too late, the child is dead."

4 Jesus, to prevent his grieving,
Kindly spoke and eas'd his pain;
"Be not fearful, but believing,
"Thou shalt see her live again."
When he found the people weeping,
"Cease," he said, "no longer mourn;
"For she is not dead, but sleeping;"
Then they laughed him to scorn.

5 O thou meek and lowly Saviour,
How determin'd is thy love!
Not this rude, unkind behaviour
Could thy gracious purpose move:

Soon as he the room had enter'd,
Spoke, and took her by the hand;
Death at once his prey surrender'd,
And she liv'd at his command.

6 Fear not then, distress'd believer,
Venture on his mighty name;
He is able to deliver,
And his love is still the same:
Can his pity or his power
Suffer thee to pray in vain;
Wait but his appointed hour,
And thy suit thou shalt obtain.

XCIV. *But one Loaf.** Chap. viii. 14.

1 When the disciples cross'd the lake
With but one loaf on board,
How strangely did their hearts mistake
The caution of their Lord.

2 "The leaven of the Pharisees
"Beware," the Saviour said;
They thought, it is because he sees
We have forgotten bread.

3 It seems they had forgotten too
What their own eyes had view'd;
How with what scarce suffic'd for few,
He fed a multitude.

4 If five small loaves, by his command,
Could many thousands serve;
Might they not trust his gracious hand,
That they should never starve?

* Book iii. Hymn 57.

5 They oft his pow'r and love had known,
And doubtless were to blame;
But we have reason good to own
That we are just the same.

6 How often has he brought relief,
And ev'ry want supply'd!
Yet soon, again, our unbelief
Says, "Can the Lord provide?"

7 Be thankful for one loaf to-day,
Though that be all your store;
To-morrow, if you trust and pray,
Shall timely bring you more.

XCV. *Bartimeus.* Chap. x. 47, 48.

1 "MERCY, O thou Son of David!"
Thus blind Bartimeus pray'd;
"Others by thy word are saved,
"Now to me afford thine aid."
Many for his crying chid him,
But he call'd the louder still;
Till the gracious Saviour bid him
"Come, and ask me what you will."

2 Money was not what he wanted,
Though by begging us'd to live;
But he ask'd, and Jesus granted,
Alms which none but he could give:
"Lord, remove this grievous blindness,
"Let my eyes behold the day;"
Straight he saw, and, won by kindness,
Follow'd Jesus in the way.

3 Oh! methinks I hear him praising,
Publishing to all around,
"Friends, is not my case amazing?
"What a Saviour I have found!
"Oh! that all the blind but knew him,
"And would be advis'd by me!
"Surely, would they hasten to him,
"He would cause them all to see."

XCVI. C. *The House of Prayer.* Chap. xi. 17.

1 THY mansion is the Christian's heart,
O Lord, thy dwelling-place secure!
Bid the unruly throng depart,
And leave the consecrated door.

2 Devoted as it is to thee,
A thievish swarm frequents the place;
They steal away my joys from me,
And rob my Saviour of his praise.

3 There too a sharp designing trade
Sin, Satan, and the world maintain;
Nor cease to press me, and persuade,
To part with ease and purchase pain.

4 I know them, and I hate their din,
Am weary of the bustling crowd;
But while their voice is heard within,
I cannot serve thee as I would.

5 Oh! for the joy thy presence gives,
What peace shall reign when thou art here!
Thy presence makes this den of thieves
A calm, delightful house of pray'r.

6 And if thou make thy temple shine,
Yet, self-abas'd, will I adore;
The gold and silver are not mine,
I give thee what was thine before.

XCVII. *The blasted Fig-tree.* Chap. xi. 20.

1 One awful word which Jesus spoke
Against the tree which bore no fruit,
More piercing than the lightning's stroke,
Blasted and dry'd it to the root.

2 But could a tree the Lord offend,
To make him show his anger thus?
He surely had a farther end,
To be a warning word to us.

3 The fig-tree by its leaves was known;
But having not a fig to show,
It brought a heavy sentence down,
"Let none hereafter on thee grow."

4 Too many, who the Gospel hear,
Whom Satan blinds and sin deceives,
We to this fig-tree may compare,
They yield no fruit, but only leaves.

5 Knowledge, and zeal, and gifts, and talk,
Unless combin'd with faith and love,
And witness'd by a Gospel-walk,
Will not a true profession prove.

6 Without the fruit the Lord expects,
Knowledge will make our state the worse;
The barren trees he still rejects,
And soon will blast them with his curse.

7 O Lord, unite our hearts in pray'r!
On each of us thy Spirit send,
That we the fruits of grace may bear,
And find acceptance in the end.

LUKE.

XCVIII. *The two Debtors.* Chap. vii. 47.

1 Once a woman silent stood
While Jesus sat at meat;
From her eyes she pour'd a flood,
To wash his sacred feet:
Shame and wonder, joy and love,
All at once possess'd her mind,
That she e'er so vile could prove,
Yet now forgiveness find.

2 "How came this vile woman here?
"Will Jesus notice such?
"Sure, if he a prophet were
"He would disdain her touch!"
Simon thus, with scornful heart,
Slighted one whom Jesus lov'd;
But her Saviour took her part,
And thus his pride reprov'd:

3 "If two men in debt were bound,
"One less, the other more,
"Fifty, or five hundred pound,
"And both alike were poor;
"Should the lender both forgive,
"When he saw them both distress'd,
"Which of them would you believe
"Engag'd to love him best?"

4 "Surely he who most did owe,"
The Pharisee replied:
Then our Lord, "By judging so,
"Thou dost for her decide.
"Simon, if like her you knew
"How much you forgiveness need;
"You like her had acted too,
"And welcom'd me indeed.

5 "When the load of sin is felt,
"And much forgiveness known,
"Then the heart of course will melt,
"Though hard before as stone:
"Blame not then her love and tears,
"Greatly she in debt has been;
"But I have remov'd her fears,
"And pardon'd all her sin."

6 When I read this woman's case,
Her love and humble zeal,
I confess, with shame of face,
My heart is made of steel:
Much has been forgiv'n to me,
Jesus paid my heavy score;
What a creature must I be,
That I can love no more!

XCIX. *The good Samaritan.* Chap. x. 33—35.

1 How kind the good Samaritan
To him who fell among the thieves!
Thus Jesus pities fallen man,
And heals the wounds the soul receives.

2 Oh! I remember well the day,
When sorely wounded, nearly slain,
Like that poor man I bleeding lay,
And groan'd for help, but groan'd in vain.

3 Men saw me in this helpless case,
And pass'd without compassion by;
Each neighbour turn'd away his face,
Unmoved by my mournful cry.

4 But he whose name had been my scorn,
(As Jews Samaritans despise),
Came, when he saw me thus forlorn,
With love and pity in his eyes.

5 Gently he rais'd me from the ground,
Press'd me to lean upon his arm,
And into ev'ry gaping wound
He pour'd his own all-healing balm.

6 Unto his church my steps he led,
The house prepar'd for sinners lost,
Gave charge I should be cloth'd and fed,
And took upon him all the cost.

7 Thus sav'd from death, from want secur'd,
I wait till he again shall come,
(When I shall be completely cur'd),
And take me to his heav'nly home.

8 There, through eternal, boundless days,
When nature's wheel no longer rolls,
How shall I love, adore, and praise,
This good Samaritan to souls!

C. *Martha and Mary.* Chap. x. 38—42.

1 MARTHA her love and joy express'd
By care to entertain her guest;
While Mary sat to hear her Lord,
And could not bear to lose a word.

2 The principle, in both the same,
Produc'd in each a diff'rent aim;
The one to feast the Lord was led,
The other waited to be fed.

3 But Mary chose the better part,
Her Saviour's words refresh'd her heart;
While busy Martha angry grew,
And lost her time and temper too.

4 With warmth she to her sister spoke,
But brought upon herself rebuke:
"One thing is needful, and but one,
"Why do thy thoughts on many run?"

5 How oft are we like Martha vex'd,
Encumber'd, hurried, and perplex'd?
While trifles so engross our thought,
The one thing needful is forgot.

6 Lord, teach us this one thing to choose,
Which they who gain can never lose;
Sufficient in itself alone,
And needful, were the world our own.

7 Let grov'lling hearts the world admire,
Thy love is all that I require!
Gladly I may the rest resign,
If the one needful thing be mine!

CI. *The Heart taken.* Chap. xi. 21, 22.

1 The castle of the human heart,
Strong in its native sin,
Is guarded well in every part,
By him who dwells within.

2 For Satan there in arms resides,
And calls the place his own;
With care against assaults provides,
And rules as on a throne.

3 Each traitor thought, on him as chief,
In blind obedience waits;
And pride, self-will, and unbelief,
Are posted at the gates.

4 Thus Satan for a season reigns,
And keeps his goods in peace;
The soul is pleas'd to wear his chains,
Nor wishes a release.

5 But Jesus, stronger far than he,
In his apppointed hour,
Appears to set his people free
From the usurper's pow'r.

6 "This heart I bought with blood," he says,
"And now it shall be mine;"
His voice the strong one arm'd dismays,
He knows he must resign.

7 In spite of unbelief and pride,
And self, and Satan's art,
The gates of brass fly open wide,
And Jesus wins the heart.

8 The rebel soul that once withstood
The Saviour's kindest call,
Rejoices now, by grace subdu'd,
To serve him with her all.

CII. *The Worldling.* Chap. ii. 16—21.

1 "My barns are full, my stores increase,
"And now, for many years,
"Soul, eat and drink, and take thine ease,
"Secure from wants and fears."

2 Thus while a worldling boasted once,
As many now presume,
He heard the Lord himself pronounce
His sudden, awful doom.

3 "This night, vain fool, thy soul must pass
"Into a world unknown;
"And who shall then the stores possess
"Which thou hast call'd thine own."

4 Thus blinded mortals fondly scheme
For happiness below;
Till death disturbs the pleasing dream,
And they awake to woe.

5 Ah! who can speak the vast dismay
That fills the sinner's mind,
When, torn by death's strong hand away,
He leaves his all behind.

6 Wretches, who cleave to earthly things,
But are not rich to God;
Their dying hour is full of stings,
And hell their dark abode.

7 Dear Saviour, make us timely wise,
Thy Gospel to attend,
That we may live above the skies,
When this poor life shall end.

CIII. *The Barren Fig-tree.* Chap. xiii. 6—9.

1 THE church a garden is
In which believers stand,
Like ornamental trees
Planted by God's own hand:
His spirit waters all the roots,
And every branch abounds with fruits.

2 But other trees there are
In this enclosure grow,
Which, though they promise fair,
Have only leaves to show:
No fruits of grace are on them found,
They stand but cumb'rers of the ground.

3 The under gard'ner grieves,
In vain his strength he spends,
For heaps of useless leaves
Afford him small amends:
He hears the Lord his will make known,
To cut the barren fig-trees down.

4 How difficult his post,
What pangs his bowels move,
To find his wishes crost,
His labours useless prove!
His last relief, his earnest pray'r,
"Lord, spare them yet another year.

5 "Spare them, and let me try
"What farther means may do;
"I'll fresh manure apply,
"My digging I'll renew:
"Who knows but yet they fruit may yield!
"If not—'tis just, they must be fell'd."

6 If under means of grace
No gracious fruits appear,
It is a dreadful case;
Though God may long forbear,
At length he'll strike the threat'ned blow,*
And lay the barren fig-tree low.

CIV. *The Prodigal Son.* Chap. xv. 11—24.

1 AFFLICTIONS, though they seem severe,
In mercy oft are sent;
They stopp'd the prodigal's career,
And forc'd him to repent.

2 Although he no relentings felt,
Till he had spent his store;
His stubborn heart began to melt
When famine pinch'd him sore.

3 "What have I gain'd by sin," he said,
"But hunger, shame, and fear;
"My father's house abounds with bread,
"While I am starving here.

4 "I'll go and tell him all I've done,
"And fall before his face;
"Unworthy to be call'd his son,
"I'll seek a servant's place."

5 His father saw him coming back,
He saw, and ran, and smil'd;
And threw his arms around the neck
Of his rebellious child.

6 "Father, I've sinn'd—but, Oh forgive!"
"I've heard enough," he said;
"Rejoice, my house, my son's alive,
"For whom I mourn'd as dead.

* Book II. Hymn 26.

7 "Now let the fatted calf be slain,
"And spread the news around;
"My son was dead, but lives again,
"Was lost, but now is found."

8 'Tis thus the Lord his love reveals,
To call poor sinners home;
More than a father's love he feels,
And welcomes all that come.

CV. *The Rich Man and Lazarus.* Chap. xvi. 19—2

1 A WORLDLING spent each day
In luxury and state;
While a believer lay
A beggar at his gate:
Think not the Lord's appointment strange;
Death made a great and lasting change.

2 Death brought the saint release
From want, disease, and scorn;
And to the land of peace,
His soul by angels borne,
In Abr'ham's bosom safely plac'd,
Enjoys an everlasting feast.

3 The rich man also died,
And in a moment fell
From all his pomp and pride
Into the flames of hell:
The beggar's bliss from far beheld,
His soul with double anguish fill'd.

4 "O Abr'ham send," he cries
(But his request was vain),
"The beggar from the skies
"To mitigate my pain!
"One drop of water I entreat,
"To soothe my tongue's tormenting heat."

5 Let all who worldly pelf
And worldly spirits have,
Observe, each for himself,
The answer Abr'ham gave:
"Remember thou wast fill'd with good,
"While the poor beggar pin'd for food.

6 "Neglected at thy door,
"With tears he begg'd his bread;
"But now he weeps no more,
"His griefs and pains are fled:
"His joys eternally will flow,
"While thine expire in endless woe."

7 Lord, make us truly wise,
To choose thy people's lot,
And earthly joys despise,
Which soon will be forgot:
The greatest evil we can fear,
Is to possess our portion here!

CVI. *The Importunate Widow.** Chap. xviii. 1—7.

1 Our Lord, who knows full well,
The heart of ev'ry saint,
Invites us by a parable,
To pray and never faint.

2 He bows his gracious ear,
We never plead in vain;
Yet we must wait till he appear,
And pray, and pray again.

3 Though unbelief suggest,
Why should we longer wait?
He bids us never give him rest,
But be importunate.

* Book II. Hymn 60.

4 'Twas thus a widow poor,
Without support or friend,
Beset the unjust judge's door,
And gain'd, at last, her end.

5 For her he little car'd,
As little for the laws;
Nor God, nor man, did he regard,
Yet he espous'd her cause.

6 She urg'd him day and night,
Would no denial take;
At length he said, "I'll do her right,
"For my own quiet's sake."

7 And shall not Jesus hear
His chosen when they cry?
Yes, though he may a while forbear,
He'll help them from on high.

8 His nature, truth, and love,
Engage him on their side;
When they are griev'd, his bowels move,
And can they be deny'd?

9 Then let us earnest be,
And never faint in pray'r;
He loves our importunity,
And makes our cause his care.

CVII. *Zaccheus.* Chap. xix. 1—6.

1 ZACCHEUS climb'd the tree,
And thought himself unknown:
But how surpris'd was he
When Jesus call'd him down!
The Lord beheld him, though conceal'd,
And by a word his pow'r reveal'd.

2 Wonder and joy at once
Were painted in his face:
"Does he my name pronounce,
"And does he know my case?
"Will Jesus deign with me to dine?
"Lord, I, with all I have, am thine."

3 Thus where the Gospel's preach'd,
And sinners come to hear,
The hearts of some are reach'd
Before they are aware:
The word directly speaks to them,
And seems to point them out by name.

4 'Tis curiosity
Oft brings them in the way,
Only the man to see,
And hear what he can say;
But how the sinner starts to find
The preacher knows his inmost mind!

5 His long-forgotten faults
Are brought again in view,
And all his secret thoughts
Reveal'd in public too:
Though compass'd with a crowd about,
The searching word has found him out.

6 While thus distressing pain
And sorrow fills his heart,
He hears a voice again
That bids his fears depart:
Then, like Zaccheus, he is blest,
And Jesus deigns to be his guest.

CVIII. *The Believer's Danger, Safety, and Duty.*
Chap. xxii. 31, 32.

1 "SIMON, beware!" the Saviour said,
"Satan, your subtle foe,
"Already has his measures laid
"Your soul to overthrow.

2 "He wants to sift you all as wheat,
"And thinks his vict'ry sure;
"But I his malice will defeat,
"My pray'r shall faith secure."

3 Believers, tremble and rejoice,
Your help and danger view;
This warning has to you a voice,
This promise speaks to you.

4 Satan beholds with jealous eye,
Your privilege and joy;
He's always watchful, always nigh,
To tear and to destroy.

5 But Jesus lives to intercede,
That faith may still prevail;
He will support in time of need,
And Satan's arts shall fail.

6 Yet let us not the warning slight,
But watchful still be found;
Though faith cannot be slain in fight,
It may receive a wound.

7 While Satan watches, dare we sleep?
We must our guard maintain;
But, Lord, do thou the city keep,
Or else we watch in vain. *

* Psalm cxxvii. 1.

CIX. *Father, forgive them.* Chap. xxiii. 34.

1 "FATHER, forgive," the Saviour said,
"They know not what they do:"
His heart was mov'd when thus he pray'd
For me, my friends, and you.

2 He saw that as the Jews abus'd
And crucify'd his flesh;
So he, by us, would be refus'd,
And crucify'd afresh.

3 Through love of sin, we long were prone
To act as Satan bid;
But now with grief and shame we own,
We knew not what we did.

4 We knew not the desert of sin,
Nor whom we thus defy'd;
Nor where our guilty souls had been,
If Jesus had not dy'd.

5 We knew not what a law we broke,
How holy, just, and pure!
Nor what a God we durst provoke,
But thought ourselves secure.

6 But Jesus all our guilt foresaw,
And shed his precious blood,
To satisfy the holy law,
And make our peace with God.

7 My sin, dear Saviour, made thee bleed,
Yet didst thou pray for me!
I knew not what I did, indeed,
When ignorant of thee.

CX. *The Two Malefactors.* Chap. xxiii. 39—43.

1 SOVEREIGN grace has pow'r alone
To subdue a heart of stone;
And the moment grace is felt,
Then the hardest heart will melt.

2 When the Lord was crucify'd,
Two transgressors with him died;
One, with vile blaspheming tongue,
Scoff'd at Jesus as he hung.

3 Thus he spent his wicked breath,
In the very jaws of death;
Perish'd, as too many do,
With the Saviour in his view.

4 But the other, touch'd with grace,
Saw the danger of his case;
Faith receiv'd to own the Lord,
Whom the scribes and priests abhorr'd.

5 "Lord," he prayed, "remember me,
"When in glory thou shalt be:"—
"Soon with me," the Lord replies,
"Thou shalt rest in paradise."

6 This was wondrous grace indeed,
Grace vouchsaf'd in time of need!
Sinners, trust in Jesu's name,
You shall find him still the same.

7 But beware of unbelief,
Think upon the hard'ned thief;
If the Gospel you disdain,
Christ, to you, will die in vain.

JOHN.

CXI. *The Woman of Samaria.* Chap. iv. 28.

1 JESUS, to what didst thou submit
To save thy dear-bought flock from hell!
Like a poor trav'ller, see him sit,
Athirst and weary by the well.

2 The woman who for water came,
(What great events on small depend,)
Then learnt the glory of his name,
The well of life, the sinner's friend!

3 Taught from her birth to hate the Jews,
And fill'd with party pride, at first
Her zeal induc'd her to refuse
Water, to quench the Saviour's thirst.

4 But soon she knew the gift of God;
And Jesus, whom she scorn'd before,
Unask'd, that drink on her bestow'd:
Which whoso tastes shall thirst no more.

5 His words her prejudice remov'd,
Her sin she felt, relief she found;
She saw and heard, believ'd and lov'd,
And ran to tell her neighbours round.

6 O come, this wondrous man behold!
The promis'd Saviour! this is he,
Whom ancient prophecies foretold,
Born, from our guilt to set us free.

7 Like her, in ignorance content,
I worshipp'd long I knew not what;
Like her, on other things intent,
I found him when I sought him not.

8 He told me all that e'er I did,
And told me all was pardon'd too;
And now, like her, as he has bid,
I live to point him out to you.

CXII. *The Pool of Bethesda.** Chap. v. 2—4.

1 Beside the Gospel pool
Appointed for the poor,
From year to year my helpless soul
Has waited for a cure.

2 How often have I seen
The healing waters move;
And others, round me, stepping in,
Their efficacy prove?

3 But my complaints remain;
I feel the very same;
As full of guilt, and fear, and pain,
As when at first I came.

4 Oh would the Lord appear
My malady to heal!
He knows how long I've languish'd here,
And what distress I feel.

5 How often have I thought
Why should I longer lie?
Surely the mercy I have sought
Is not for such as I.

* Book III. Hymn 7.

6 But whither can I go?
There is no other pool
Where streams of sov'reign virtue flow
To make a sinner whole.

7 Here then, from day to day,
I'll wait, and hope, and try;
Can Jesus hear a sinner pray,
Yet suffer him to die?

8 No: he is full of grace;
He never will permit
A soul that fain would see his face,
To perish at his feet.

CXIII. *Another.*

1 Here at Bethesda's pool, the poor,
The wither'd, halt, and blind,
With waiting hearts expect a cure,
And free admittance find.

2 Here streams of wondrous virtue flow,
To heal a sin-sick soul;
To wash the filthy white as snow,
And make the wounded whole.

3 The dumb break forth in songs of praise,
The blind their sight receive;
The cripple runs in wisdom's ways,
The dead revive and live!

4 Restrain'd to no one case, or time,
These waters always move;
Sinners in every age and clime
Their vital influence prove.

5 Yet numbers daily near them lie,
Who meet with no relief;
With life in view they pine and die
In hopeless unbelief.

6 'Tis strange they should refuse to bathe,
And yet frequent the pool;
But none can even wish for faith,
While love of sin bears rule.

7 Satan their consciences has seal'd,
And stupify'd their thought;
For were they willing to be heal'd,
The cure would soon be wrought.

8 Do thou, dear Saviour, interpose,
Their stubborn wills constrain;
Or else to them the water flows,
And grace is preach'd, in vain.

CXIV. *The Disciples at Sea.** Chap. vi. 16—21.

1 Constrain'd by their Lord to embark,
And venture, without him, to sea;
The season tempestuous and dark,
How griev'd the disciples must be!
But though he remain'd on the shore,
He spent the night for them in pray'r;
They still were as safe as before,
And equally under his care.

2 They strove, though in vain, for a while,
The force of the waves to withstand;
But when they were weary'd with toil,
They saw their dear Saviour at hand:

* Book II. Hymn 87.

They gladly receiv'd him on board,
His presence their spirits reviv'd,
The sea became calm at his word,
And soon at their port they arriv'd.

3 We, like the disciples, are toss'd
By storms on a perilous deep;
But cannot be possibly lost,
For Jesus has charge of the ship:
Though billows and winds are enrag'd,
And threaten to make us their sport,
This pilot his word has engag'd
To bring us, in safety, to port.

4 If sometimes we struggle alone,
And he is withdrawn from our view;
It makes us more willing to own
We nothing without him can do:
Then Satan our hopes would assail,
But Jesus is still within call;
And when our poor efforts quite fail,
He comes in good time and does all.

5 Yet, Lord, we are ready to shrink,
Unless we thy presence perceive;
O save us (we cry), or we sink,
We would, but we cannot, believe:
The night has been long and severe,
The winds and the seas are still high,
Dear Saviour, this moment appear,
And say to our souls, "It is I."*

* Book III. Hymn 18.

CXV. *Will ye also go away?* Chap. vi. 67—69.

1 When any turn from Zion's way,
(Alas! what numbers do!)
Methinks I hear my Saviour say,
"Wilt thou forsake me too?"

2 Ah, Lord! with such a heart as mine,
Unless thou hold me fast,
I feel I must, I shall decline,
And prove like them at last.

3 Yet thou alone hast pow'r, I know,
To save a wretch like me;
To whom, or whither, could I go,
If I should turn from thee?

4 Beyond a doubt I rest assur'd
Thou art the Christ of God,
Who hast eternal life secur'd
By promise and by blood.

5 The help of men and angels join'd
Could never reach my case;
Nor can I hope relief to find,
But in thy boundless grace.

6 No voice but thine can give me rest,
And bid my fears depart;
No love but thine can make me bless'd,
And satisfy my heart.

7 What anguish has that question stirr'd,
If I will also go?
Yet, Lord, relying on thy word,
I humbly answer, No.

CXVI. *The Resurrection and the Life.* Chap. xi. 25.

1 "I AM," saith Christ, "your glorious head"
(May we attention give),
"The resurrection of the dead,
"The life of all that live.

2 "By faith in me the soul receives
"New life, though dead before;
"And he that in my name believes,
"Shall live to die no more.

3 "The sinner, sleeping in his grave,
"Shall at my voice awake;
"And when I once begin to save,
"My work I ne'er forsake."

4 Fulfil thy promise, gracious Lord,
On us assembled here;
Put forth thy Spirit with the word,
And cause the dead to hear.

5 Preserve the pow'r of faith alive
In those who love thy name;
For sin and Satan daily strive
To quench the sacred flame.

6 Thy pow'r and mercy first prevail'd,
From death to set us free;
And often since our life had fail'd,
If not renew'd by thee.

7 To thee we look, to thee we bow,
To thee for help we call;
Our life and resurrection thou,
Our hope, our joy, our all.

CXVII. *Weeping Mary.* Chap. xx. 11—16.

1 Mary to her Saviour's tomb
Hasted at the early dawn;
Spice she brought, and sweet perfume;
But the Lord she lov'd was gone.
For a while she weeping stood,
Struck with sorrow and surprise,
Shedding tears, a plenteous flood,
For her heart supply'd her eyes.

2 Jesus, who is always near,
Though too often unperceiv'd,
Came, his drooping child to cheer,
Kindly asking why she griev'd.
Though at first she knew him not,
When he call'd her by her name,
Then her griefs were all forgot,
For she found he was the same.

3 Grief and sighing quickly fled
When she heard his welcome voice;
Just before she thought him dead,
Now he bids her heart rejoice.
What a change his word can make,
Turning darkness into day!
You who weep for Jesu's sake,
He will wipe your tears away.

4 He who came to comfort her,
When she thought her all was lost,
Will for your relief appear,
Though you now are tempest-toss'd:
On his word your burden cast,
On his love your thoughts employ;
Weeping for a while may last,
But the morning brings the joy.

CXVIII. C. *Lovest thou Me?* Chap. xxi. 16.

1 Hark, my soul! it is the Lord;
'Tis thy Saviour, hear his word;
Jesus speaks, and speaks to thee;
"Say, poor sinner, lov'st thou me?

2 "I deliver'd thee when bound,
"And, when wounded, heal'd thy wound;
"Sought thee wand'ring, set thee right,
"Turn'd thy darkness into light.

3 "Can a woman's tender care
"Cease towards the child she bare?
"Yes, she may forgetful be,
"Yet will I remember thee.

4 "Mine is an unchanging love,
"Higher than the heights above;
"Deeper than the depths beneath,
"Free and faithful, strong as death.

5 "Thou shalt see my glory soon,
"When the work of grace is done;
"Partner of my throne shalt be,
"Say, poor sinner, lov'st thou me?"

6 Lord, it is my chief complaint,
That my love is weak and faint;
Yet I love thee and adore,
Oh for grace to love thee more!

CXIX. *Another.*

1 'Tis a point I long to know,
Oft it causes anxious thought;
Do I love the Lord or no?
Am I his, or am I not?

2 If I love, why am I thus?
Why this dull and lifeless frame?
Hardly, sure, can they be worse,
Who have never heard his name!

3 Could my heart so hard remain,
Pray'r a task and burden prove,
Ev'ry trifle give me pain,
If I knew a Saviour's love?

4 When I turn my eyes within,
All is dark, and vain, and wild;
Fill'd with unbelief and sin,
Can I deem myself a child?

5 If I pray, or hear, or read,
Sin is mix'd with all I do;
You that love the Lord indeed,
Tell me, Is it thus with you?

6 Yet I mourn my stubborn will,
Find my sin a grief and thrall;
Should I grieve for what I feel,
If I did not love at all?

7 Could I joy his saints to meet,
Choose the ways I once abhorr'd,
Find, at times, the promise sweet,
If I did not love the Lord?

8 Lord, decide the doubtful case!
Thou who art thy people's sun,
Shine upon thy work of grace,
If it be indeed begun.

9 Let me love thee more and more,
If I love at all, I pray;
If I have not lov'd before,
Help me to begin to-day.

ACTS

CXX. *The Death of Stephen.* Chap. vii. 54—60.

1 As some tall rock amidst the waves
The fury of the tempest braves,
While the fierce billows, tossing high,
Break at its foot, and, murm'ring, die:

2 Thus, they who in the Lord confide,
Though foes assault on ev'ry side,
Cannot be mov'd or overthrown,
For Jesus makes their cause his own.

3 So faithful Stephen, undismay'd,
The malice of the Jews survey'd;
The holy joy which fill'd his breast,
A lustre on his face impress'd.

4 "Behold!" he said, "the world of light
"Is open'd to my strengthen'd sight;
"My glorious Lord appears in view,
"That Jesus whom ye lately slew."

5 With such a friend and witness near,
No form of death could make him fear;
Calm, amidst show'rs of stones, he kneels,
And only for his murd'rers feels.

6 May we, by faith, perceive thee thus,
Dear Saviour, ever near to us!
This sight our peace through life shall keep,
And death be fear'd no more than sleep.

CXXI. *The Rebel's Surrender to Grace. Lord, What wilt thou have me to do?* Chap. ix. 6.

1 Lord, thou hast won, at length I yield;
My heart, by mighty grace compell'd,
Surrenders all to thee;
Against thy terrors long I strove,
But who can stand against thy love?
Love conquers even me.

2 All that a wretch could do, I try'd,
Thy patience scorn'd, thy pow'r defy'd,
And trampled on thy laws;
Scarcely thy martyrs at the stake
Could stand more steadfast for thy sake,
Than I in Satan's cause.

3 But since thou hast thy love reveal'd,
And shown my soul a pardon seal'd,
I can resist no more:
Couldst thou for such a sinner bleed?
Canst thou for such a rebel plead?
I wonder and adore!

4 If thou hadst bid thy thunders roll,
And lightnings flash, to blast my soul,
I still had stubborn been:
But mercy has my heart subdu'd,
A bleeding Saviour I have view'd,
And now I hate my sin.

5 Now, Lord, I would be thine alone,
Come, take possession of thine own,
For thou hast set me free;
Releas'd from Satan's hard command,
See all my powers waiting stand,
To be employ'd by thee.

6 My will conform'd to thine would move;
On thee my hope, desire, and love,
In fix'd attention join;
My hands, my eyes, my ears, my tongue,
Have Satan's servants been too long,
But now they shall be thine.

7 And can I be the very same,
Who lately durst blaspheme thy name,
And on thy Gospel tread?
Surely each one who hears my case,
Will praise thee, and confess thy grace
Invincible indeed!

CXXII. *Peter released from Prison.* Chap. xii. 5—8.

1 FERVENT, persevering pray'rs
Are faith's assur'd resource;
Brazen gates and iron bars
In vain withstand their force:
Peter, when in prison cast,
Though by soldiers kept with care,
Though the doors were bolted fast,
Was soon releas'd by pray'r.

2 While he slept an angel came,
And spread a light around,
Touch'd, and call'd him by his name,
And rais'd him from the ground;
All his chains and fetters burst,
Ev'ry door wide open flew;
Peter thought he dream'd at first,
But found the vision true.

3 Thus the Lord can make a way
To bring his saints relief;
'Tis their part to wait and pray,
In spite of unbelief:

He can break through walls of stone,
Sink the mountain to a plain;
They to whom his name is known
Can never pray in vain.

4 Thus in chains of guilt and sin,
Poor sinners sleeping lie;
No alarm is felt within,
Although condemn'd to die;
Till descending from above
(Mercy smiling in his eyes),
Jesus, with a voice of love,
Awakes, and bids them rise.

5 Glad the summons they obey,
And liberty desire;
Straight their fetters melt away,
Like wax before the fire:
By the word of him who died,
Guilty pris'ners to release,
Ev'ry door flies open wide,
And they depart in peace.

CXXIII. *The trembling Gaoler.* Chap. xvi. 29—31.

1 A BELIEVER, free from care,
May in chains or dungeons sing,
If the Lord be with him there,
And be happier than a king:
Paul and Silas thus confin'd,
Though their backs were torn by whips,
Yet, possessing peace of mind,
Sung his praise with joyful lips.

2 Suddenly the prison shook,
Open flew the iron doors;
And the gaoler, terror-struck,
Now his captives' help implores:

Trembling at their feet he fell,
"Tell me, sirs, what must I do
"To be sav'd from guilt and hell?
"None can tell me this but you."

3 "Look to Jesus," they replied;
"If in him thou canst believe,
"By the death which he has died,
"Thou salvation shalt receive."
While the living word he heard,
Faith sprung up within his heart,
And, releas'd from all he fear'd,
In their joy his soul had part.

4 Sinners, Christ is still the same;
O that you could likewise fear!
Then the mention of his name
Would be music to your ear:
Jesus rescues Satan's slaves,
His dear wounds still plead, "Forgive!"
Jesus to the utmost saves;
Sinners, look to him and live.

CXXIV. *The Exorcists.* Chap. xix. 13—16.

1 When the apostle wonders wrought,
And heal'd the sick in Jesu's name,
The sons of Sceva vainly thought
That they had pow'r to do the same.

2 On one possess'd they try'd their art,
And, naming Jesus preach'd by Paul,
They charg'd the spirit to depart,
Expecting he'd obey their call.

3 The spirit answer'd, with a mock,
"Jesus I know, and Paul I know;
"I must have gone if Paul had spoke;
"But who are ye that bid me go?"

4 With fury then the man he fill'd,
Who on the poor pretenders flew;
Naked and wounded, almost kill'd,
They fled in all the people's view.

5 Jesus! that name, pronounc'd by faith,
Is full of wonder-working pow'r;
It conquers Satan, sin, and death,
And cheers in trouble's darkest hour.

6 But they who are not born again,
Know nothing of it but the sound;
They do but take his name in vain,
When most their zeal and pains abound.

7 Satan their vain attempts derides,
Whether they talk, or pray, or preach:
Long as the love of sin abides,
His pow'r is safe beyond their reach.

8 But you, believers, may rejoice,
Satan well knows your mighty Friend;
He trembles at your Saviour's voice,
And owns he cannot gain his end.

CXXV. *Paul's Voyage.* Chap. xxvii.

1 If Paul in Cæsar's court must stand,
He need not fear the sea;
Secur'd from harm on ev'ry hand
By the divine decree.

2 Although the ship, in which he sail'd,
By dreadful storms was toss'd;
The promise over all prevail'd,
And not a life was lost.

3 Jesus! the God whom Paul ador'd,
Who saves in time need,
Was then confess'd, by all on board,
A present help indeed!

4 Though neither sun nor stars were seen,
Paul knew the Lord was near:
And faith preserv'd his soul serene,
When others shook for fear.

5 Believers thus are toss'd about,
On life's tempestuous main;
But grace assures, beyond a doubt,
They shall their port attain.

6 They must, they shall, appear one day,
Before their Saviour's throne;
The storms they meet with by the way,
But make his power known.

7 Their passage lies across the brink
Of many a threat'ning wave;
The world expects to see them sink,
But Jesus lives to save.

8 Lord, though we are but feeble worms,
Yet since thy word is past,
We'll venture through a thousand storms
To see thy face at last.

ROMANS.

CXXVI. *The Good that I would, I do not.* Chap. vii. 19.

1 I WOULD, but cannot sing,
Guilt has untun'd my voice:
The serpent sin's envenom'd sting
Has poison'd all my joys.

2 I know the Lord is nigh,
And would, but cannot pray;
For Satan meets me when I try,
And frights my soul away.

3 I would, but can't repent,
Though I endeavour oft;
This stony heart can ne'er relent
Till Jesus make it soft.

4 I would, but cannot love,
Though woo'd by love divine;
No arguments have pow'r to move
A soul so base as mine.

5 I would, but cannot rest
In God's most holy will;
I know what he appoints is best,
Yet murmur at it still.

6 Oh could I but believe!
Then all would easy be;
I would, but cannot—Lord, relieve;
My help must come from thee!

7 But if indeed I would,
Though I can nothing do;
Yet the desire is something good,
For which my praise is due.

8 By nature prone to ill,
Till thine appointed hour,
I was as destitute of will,
As now I am of pow'r.

9 Wilt thou not crown at length
The work thou hast begun?
And, with a will, afford me strength
In all thy ways to run.

CXXVII. *Salvation drawing nearer.* Chap. xiii. 11, 12.

1 Darkness overspreads us here,
But the night wears fast away;
Jacob's Star will soon appear,
Leading on eternal day!
Now 'tis time to rouse from sleep,
Trim our lamps, and stand prepar'd;
For our Lord strict watch to keep,
Lest he finds us off our guard.

2 Let his people courage take,
Bear with a submissive mind:
All they suffer for his sake,
Rich amends they soon will find:
He will wipe away their tears,
Near himself appoint their lot;
All their sorrows, pains, and fears,
Quickly then will be forgot.

3 Though already sav'd by grace,
From the hour we first believ'd;
Yet, while sin and war have place,
We have but a part receiv'd;

Still we for salvation wait,
Ev'ry hour it nearer comes!
Death will break the prison gate,
And admit us to our homes.

4 Sinners, what can you expect,
You who now the Saviour dare,
Break his laws, his grace reject,
You must stand before his bar!
Tremble lest he say, depart!
Oh the horrors of that sound!
Lord, make ev'ry careless heart
Seek thee while thou mayst be found.

I CORINTHIANS.

CXXVIII. *That Rock was Christ.* Chap. x. 4.

1 When Israel's tribes were parch'd with thirst,
Forth from the rock the waters burst;
And all their future journey through
Yielded them drink, and Gospel too!

2 In Moses' rod a type they saw,
Of his severe and fiery law;
The smitten rock prefigur'd him
From whose pierc'd side all blessings stream.

3 But, ah! the types were all too faint,
His sorrows or his worth to paint;
Slight was the stroke of Moses' rod,
But he endur'd the wrath of God.

4 Their outward rock could feel no pain,
But ours was wounded, torn, and slain;
The rock gave but a wat'ry flood,
But Jesus pour'd forth streams of blood.

5 The earth is like their wilderness,
A land of drought and sore distress;
Without one stream, from pole to pole,
To satisfy a thirsty soul.

6 But let the Saviour's praise resound;
In him refreshing streams are found,
Which pardon, strength, and comfort give;
And thirsty sinners drink and live.

II CORINTHIANS.

CXXIX. *My Grace is sufficient for thee.* Chap. xii. 9.

1 Oppress'd with unbelief and sin,
Fightings without, and fears within;
While earth and hell, with force combin'd,
Assault and terrify my mind:

2 What strength have I against such foes,
Such hosts and legions to oppose?
Alas! I tremble, faint, and fall;
Lord, save me, or I give up all.

3 Thus sorely prest, I sought the Lord,
To give me some sweet, cheering word;
Again I sought, and yet again;
I waited long, but not in vain.

4 Oh! 'twas a cheering word indeed!
Exactly suited to my need;
"Sufficient for thee is my grace,
"Thy weakness my great pow'r displays."

5 Now I despond and mourn no more,
I welcome all I fear'd before;
Though weak, I'm strong; though troubled, blest;
For Christ's own pow'r shall on me rest.

6 My grace would soon exhausted be,
But his is boundless as the sea;
Then let me boast with holy Paul,
That I am nothing, Christ is all.

GALATIANS.

CXXX. *The inward Warfare.* Chap. v. 17.

1 STRANGE and mysterious is my life,
What opposites I feel within!
A stable peace, a constant strife!
The rule of grace, the pow'r of sin:
Too often I am captive led,
Yet daily triumph in my head.

2 I prize the privilege of pray'r,
But, oh! what backwardness to pray!
Though on the Lord I cast my care,
I feel its burden ev'ry day;
I seek his will in all I do,
Yet find my own is working too.

3 I call the promises my own,
And prize them more than mines of gold;
Yet though their sweetness I have known,
They leave me unimpress'd and cold:
One hour upon the truth I feed,
The next I know not what I read.

4 I love the holy day of rest,
When Jesus meets his gather'd saints;
Sweet day, of all the week the best!
For its return my spirit pants:
Yet often, through my unbelief,
It proves a day of guilt and grief.

5 While on my Saviour I rely,
I know my foes shall lose their aim;
And therefore dare their pow'r defy,
Assur'd of conquest through his name:
But soon my confidence is slain,
And all my fears return again.

6 Thus diff'rent pow'rs within me strive,
And grace and sin by turns prevail;
I grieve, rejoice, decline, revive,
And vict'ry hangs in doubtful scale:
But Jesus has his promise past,
That grace shall overcome at last.

PHILIPPIANS.

CXXXI. C. *Contentment.** Chap. iv. 11.

1 FIERCE passions discompose the mind,
As tempests vex the sea;
But calm content and peace we find,
When, Lord, we turn to thee.

2 In vain, by reason and by rule,
We try to bend the will;
For none but in the Saviour's school
Can learn the heav'nly skill.

3 Since at his feet my soul has sat,
His gracious words to hear;
Contented with my present state,
I cast on him my care.

4 "Art thou a sinner, soul?" he said,
"Then how canst thou complain?
"How light thy troubles here, if weigh'd
"With everlasting pain!

* Book III. Hymn 55.

5 "If thou of murmuring wouldst be cur'd,
"Compare thy griefs with mine;
"Think what my love for thee endur'd,
"And thou wilt not repine.

6 "'Tis I appoint thy daily lot,
"And I do all things well;
"Thou soon shalt leave this wretched spot,
"And rise with me to dwell.

7 "In life my grace shall strength supply,
"Proportion'd to thy day;
"At death thou still shalt find me nigh,
"To wipe thy tears away."

8 Thus I, who once my wretched days
I vain repinings spent;
Taught in my Saviour's school of grace,
Have learn'd to be content.

HEBREWS.

CXXXII. C. *Old Testament Gospel.* Chap. iv. 2.

1 ISRAEL, in ancient days,
Not only had a view
Of Sinai in a blaze,
But learn'd the Gospel too:
The types and figures were a glass,
In which they saw the Saviour's face.

2 The paschal sacrifice,
And blood-besprinkled door, *
Seen with enlighten'd eyes,
And once apply'd with pow'r,
Would teach the need of other blood,
To reconcile an angry God.

* Exodus, xii. 13.

3 The lamb, the dove, set forth
His perfect innocence, *
Whose blood of matchless worth
Should be the soul's defence;
For he who can for sin atone,
Must have no failings of his own.

4 The scape-goat on his head †
The people's trespass bore;
And, to the desert led,
Was to be seen no more:
In him our Surety seem'd to say,
"Behold, I bear your sins away."

5 Dipt in his fellow's blood,
The living bird went free; ‡
The type, well understood,
Express'd the sinner's plea;
Describ'd a guilty soul enlarg'd,
And by a Saviour's death discharg'd.

6 Jesus, I love to trace
Throughout the sacred page,
The footsteps of thy grace,
The same in ev'ry age!
O grant that I may faithful be
To clearer light, vouchsaf'd to me!

CXXXIII. *The Word quick and powerful.* Chap. iv. 12, 13.

1 The word of Christ, our Lord,
With whom we have to do,
Is sharper than a two-edg'd sword,
To pierce the sinner through!

* Lev. xii. 6. † Lev. xvi. 21. ‡ Lev. xiv. 51—53.

2 Swift as the lightnings blaze
When awful thunders roll,
It fills the conscience with amaze,
And penetrates the soul.

3 No heart can be conceal'd
From his all-piercing eyes;
Each thought and purpose stands reveal'd,
Naked without disguise.

4 He sees his people's fears,
He notes their mournful cry;
He counts their sighs and falling tears,
And helps them from on high.

5 Though feeble is their good,
It has its kind regard;
Yea, all they would do, if they could,
Shall find a sure reward. *

6 He sees the wicked too,
And will repay them soon,
For all the evil deeds they do,
And all they would have done. †

7 Since all our secret ways
Are mark'd and known by thee,
Afford us, Lord, thy light of grace,
That we ourselves may see.

CXXXIV. *Looking unto Jesus.* Chap. xii. 2.

1 By various maxims, forms, and rules,
That pass for wisdom in the schools,
I strove my passion to restrain;
But all my efforts prov'd in vain.

* 1 Kings, viii. 18. † Matt. v. 28.

2 But since the Saviour I have known
My rules are all reduc'd to one,
To keep my Lord, by faith, in view;
This strength supplies, and motives too.

3 I see him lead a suff'ring life,
Patient amidst reproach and strife;
And from his pattern courage take
To bear, and suffer, for his sake.

4 Upon the cross I see him bleed,
And by the sight from guilt am freed:
This sight destroys the life of sin,
And quickens heav'nly life within.

5 To look to Jesus as he rose,
Confirms my faith, disarms my foes;
Satan I shame and overcome,
By pointing to my Saviour's tomb.

6 Exalted on his glorious throne,
I see him make my cause his own;
Then all my anxious cares subside,
For Jesus lives and will provide.

7 I see him look with pity down,
And hold in view the conqu'ror's crown;
If press'd with griefs and cares before,
My soul revives, nor asks for more.

8 By faith I see the hour at hand,
When in his presence I shall stand;
Then it will be my endless bliss,
To see him where, and as, he is.

CXXXV. *Love Tokens.* Chap. xii. 5—11.

1 AFFLICTIONS do not come alone,
A voice attends the rod;
By both he to his saints is known,
A father and a God!

2 "Let not my children slight the stroke
"I for chastisement send;
"Nor faint beneath my kind rebuke,
"For still I am their Friend.

3 "The wicked I perhaps may leave
"A while and not reprove;
"But all the children I receive
"I scourge, because I love.

4 "If, therefore, you were left without
"This needful discipline,
"You might with cause admit a doubt
"If you, indeed, were mine.

5 "Shall earthly parents then expect
"Their children to submit?
"And will not you, when I correct,
"Be humbled at my feet?

6 "To please themselves they oft chastise,
"And put their sons to pain;
"But you are precious in my eyes,
"And shall not smart in vain.

7 "I see your hearts at present fill'd
"With grief and deep distress;
"But soon these bitter seeds shall yield
"The fruits of righteousness."

8 Break through the clouds, dear Lord, and shine!
Let us perceive thee nigh!
And to each mourning child of thine
These gracious words apply.

REVELATION.

CXXXVI. *Ephesus.* Chap. ii. 1—7.

1 Thus saith the Lord to Ephesus,
And thus he speaks to some of us:
"Amidst my churches, lo! I stand,
"And hold the pastors in my hand.

2 "Thy works to me are fully known,
"Thy patience, and thy toil, I own;
"Thy views of Gospel-truth are clear,
"Nor canst thou other doctrine bear.

3 "Yet I must blame, while I approve;
"Where is thy first, thy fervent love?
"Dost thou forget my love to thee,
"That thine is grown so faint to me?

4 "Recall to mind the happy days
"When thou wast fill'd with joy and praise;
"Repent, thy former works renew,
"Then I'll restore thy comforts too.

5 "Return at once, when I reprove,
"Lest I thy candlestick remove;
"And thou, too late, thy loss lament,
"I warn before I strike—Repent."

6 Hearken to what the Spirit saith,
To him that overcomes by faith,
"The fruit of life's unfading tree,
"In paradise his food shall be."

CXXXVII. *Smyrna.* Chap. ii. 8—11.

1 THE message first to Smyrna sent,
A message full of grace,
To all the Saviour's flock is meant,
In every age and place.

2 Thus to his church, his chosen bride,
Saith the great First and Last,
Who ever lives, though once he died,
"Hold thy profession fast.

3 "Thy works and sorrow well I know,
"Perform'd and borne for me;
"Poor though thou art, despis'd and low,
"Yet who is rich like thee?

4 "I know thy foes, and what they say,
"How long they have blasphem'd;
"The synagogue of Satan they,
"Though they would Jews be deem'd.

5 "Though Satan for a season rage,
"And prisons be your lot,
"I am your Friend, and I engage
"You shall not be forgot.

6 "Be faithful unto death, nor fear
"A few short days of strife;
"Behold! the prize you soon shall wear,
"A crown of endless life!"

7 Hear what the Holy Spirit saith
"Of all who overcome;
"They shall escape the second death,
"The sinner's awful doom!"

CXXXVIII. C. *Sardis.* Chap. iii. 1—6.

1 "WRITE to Sardis," saith the Lord,
"And write what he declares,
"He whose Spirit, and whose word,
"Upholds the seven stars:
"All thy works and ways I search,
"Find thy zeal and love decay'd:
"Thou art call'd a living church,
"But thou art cold and dead.

2 "Watch, remember, seek, and strive,
"Exert thy former pains:
"Let thy timely care revive,
"And strengthen what remains:
"Cleanse thine heart, thy works amend,
"Former times to mind recall,
"Lest my sudden stroke descend,
"And smite thee once for all.

3 "Yet I number now in thee
"A few that are upright;
"These my Father's face shall see,
"And walk with me in white:
"When in judgement I appear,
"They for mine shall be confest;
"Let my faithful servants hear,
"And woe be to the rest."

CXXXIX. *Philadelphia.* Chap. iii. 7—13.

1 THUS saith the holy One and true,
To his beloved, faithful few,
"Of heav'n and hell I hold the keys,
"To shut, or open, as I please.

2 "I know thy works, and I approve,
"Though small thy strength, sincere thy love;
"Go on, my word and name to own,
"For none shall rob thee of thy crown.

3 "Before thee see my mercy's door
"Stands open wide to shut no more;
"Fear not temptation's fiery day,
"For I will be thy strength and stay.

4 "Thou hast my promise, hold it fast,
"The trying hour will soon be past;
"Rejoice, for, lo! I quickly come,
"To take thee to my heav'nly home.

5 "A pillar there, no more to move,
"Inscrib'd with all my names of love;
"A monument of mighty grace,
"Thou shalt for ever have a place."

6 Such is the conqueror's reward,
Prepar'd and promis'd by the Lord!
Let him that hath the ear of faith
Attend to what the Spirit saith.

CXL. *Laodicea.* Chap. iii. 14—20.

1 HEAR what the Lord, the great Amen,
The true and faithful witness says!
He form'd the vast creation's plan,
And searches all our hearts and ways.

2 To some he speaks as once of old,
"I know thee, thy profession's vain;
"Since thou art neither hot nor cold,
"I'll spit thee from me with disdain.

3 " Thou boastest 'I am wise and rich,
" Increas'd in goods, and nothing need;'
" And dost not know thou art a wretch,
" Naked, and poor, and blind, and dead.

4 " Yet while I thus rebuke, I love,
" My message is in mercy sent;
" That thou mayst my compassion prove,
" I can forgive, if thou repent.

5 " Wouldst thou be truly rich and wise?
" Come, buy my gold in fire well try'd,
" My ointment to anoint thine eyes,
" My robe thy nakedness to hide.

6 " See at thy door I stand and knock!
" Poor sinner, shall I wait in vain?
" Quickly thy stubborn heart unlock,
" That I may enter with my train.

7 " Thou canst not entertain a king,
" Unworthy thou of such a guest!
" But I my own provisions bring,
" To make thy soul a heav'nly feast."

CXLI. *The Little Book.** Chap. x.

1 When the belov'd disciple took
The angel's little, open book,
Which by the Lord's command he eat,
It tasted bitter after sweet.

2 Thus when the Gospel is embrac'd
At first 'tis sweeter to the taste
Than honey or the honey-comb,
But there's a bitterness to come.

* Book III. Hymn 27.

3 What sweetness does the promise yield,
When by the Spirit's power seal'd?
The longing soul is fill'd with good,
Nor feels a wish for other food.

4 By these inviting tastes allur'd,
We pass to what must be endur'd;
For soon we find it is decreed,
That bitter must to sweet succeed.

5 When sin revives and shows its pow'r,
When Satan threatens to devour,
When God afflicts, and men revile,
We draw our steps with pain and toil.

6 When thus deserted, tempest-tost,
The sense of former sweetness lost,
We tremble lest we were deceiv'd
In thinking that we once believ'd.

7 The Lord first makes the sweetness known,
To win and fix us for his own;
And though we now some bitter meet,
We hope for everlasting sweet.

OLNEY HYMNS,

&c.

BOOK II.

ON OCCASIONAL SUBJECTS.

I. SEASONS. | III. PROVIDENCES.
II. ORDINANCES. | IV. CREATION.

I. SEASONS.

NEW-YEAR'S HYMNS.

I. *Time how swift.*

1 WHILE with ceaseless course the sun
Hasted through the former year,
Many souls their race have run,
Never more to meet us here:
Fix'd in an eternal state,
They have done with all below;
We a little longer wait,
But how little—none can know.

2 As the winged arrow flies,
Speedily the mark to find;
As the lightning from the skies
Darts, and leaves no trace behind;
Swiftly thus our fleeting days
Bear us down life's rapid stream;
Upwards, Lord, our spirits raise,
All below is but a dream.

3 Thanks for mercies past receive,
Pardon of our sins renew;
Teach us, henceforth, how to live
With eternity in view:
Bless thy word to young and old,
Fill us with a Saviour's love;
And when life's short tale is told,
May we dwell with thee above.

II. *Time how short.*

1 TIME, with an unwearied hand,
Pushes round the seasons past;
And in life's frail glass the sand
Sinks apace, not long to last:
Many, who, as you and I,
The last year assembled thus,
In their silent graves now lie;
Graves will open soon for us!

2 Daily sin, and care, and strife,
While the Lord prolongs our breath,
Make it but a dying life,
Or a kind of living death:
Wretched they and most forlorn,
Who no better portion know;
Better ne'er to have been born,
Than to have our all below.

3 When constrain'd to go alone,
Leaving all you love behind,
Ent'ring on a world unknown,
What will then support your mind?

When the Lord his summons sends,*
Earthly comforts lose their pow'r;
Honour, riches, kindred, friends,
Cannot cheer a dying hour.

4 Happy souls who fear the Lord!
Time is not too swift for you;
When your Saviour gives the word,
Glad you'll bid the world adieu:
Then he'll wipe away your tears,
Near himself appoint your place;
Swifter fly, ye rolling years,
Lord, we long to see thy face.

III. *Uncertainty of Life.*

1 See! another year is gone!
Quickly have the seasons pass'd!
This we enter now upon
May to many prove their last:
Mercy hitherto has spar'd,
But have mercies been improv'd?
Let us ask, Am I prepar'd,
Should I be this year remov'd?

2 Some we now no longer see,
Who their mortal race have run,
Seem'd as fair for life as we,
When the former year begun:
Some, but who God only knows,
Who are here assembled now,
Ere the present year shall close,
To the stroke of death must bow.

* Isaiah, x. 3.

3 Life a field of battle is,
Thousands fall within our view;
And the next death-bolt that flies,
May be sent to me or you:
While we preach, and while we hear,
Help us, Lord, each one to think,
Vast eternity is near,
I am standing on the brink.

4 If from guilt and sin set free,
By the knowledge of thy grace,
Welcome, then, the call will be
To depart and see thy face:
To thy saints, while here below,
With new years new mercies come;
But the happiest year they know
Is their last, which leads them home.

IV. *A New-Year's Thought and Prayer.*

1 TIME, by moments, steals away,
First the hour and then the day;
Small the daily loss appears,
Yet it soon amounts to years:
Thus another year is flown,
Now it is no more our own,
If it brought or promis'd good,
Than the years before the flood.

2 But (may none of us forget)
It has left us much in debt;
Favours from the Lord receiv'd,
Sins that have his Spirit griev'd,
Mark'd by an unerring hand,
In his book recorded stand;
Who can tell the vast amount,
Plac'd to each of our account?

3 Happy the believing soul!
Christ for you has paid the whole;
While you own the debt is large,
You may plead a full discharge:
But, poor careless sinner, say,
What can you to justice pay?
Tremble, lest when life is past,
Into prison you be cast!

4 Will you still increase the score?
Still be careless as before?
Oh! forbid it, gracious Lord,
Touch their spirits by thy word!
Now, in mercy, to them show
What a mighty debt they owe!
All their unbelief subdue;
Let them find forgiveness too.

5 Spar'd to see another year,
Let thy blessing meet us here;
Come, thy dying work revive,
Bid thy drooping garden thrive:
Sun of righteousness, arise!
Warm our hearts, and bless our eyes;
Let our pray'r thy bowels move,
Make this year a time of love.

V. *Death and War.*—1778.

1 Hark! how time's wide-sounding bell
Strikes on each attentive ear!
Tolling loud the solemn knell
Of the late departed year:
Years, like mortals, wear away,
Have their birth and dying day,
Youthful spring, and wintry age,
Then to others quit the stage.

2 Sad experience may relate
What a year the last has been!
Crops of sorrow have been great,
From the fruitful seeds of sin:
Oh! what numbers, gay and blithe,
Fell by death's unsparing sithe?
While they thought the world their own,
Suddenly he mow'd them down.

3 See how war, with dreadful stride,
Marches at the Lord's command,
Spreading desolation wide,
Through a once much-favour'd land:
War, with heart and arms of steel,
Preys on thousands at a meal;
Daily drinking human gore,
Still he thirsts and calls for more.

4 If the God whom we provoke,
Hither should his way direct;
What a sin-avenging stroke
May a land like this expect!
They who now securely sleep,
Quickly then would wake and weep;
And too late would learn to fear,
When they saw the danger near.

5 You are safe who know his love,
He will all his truth perform;
To your souls a refuge prove
From the rage of ev'ry storm:
But we tremble for the youth;
Teach them, Lord, thy saving truth;
Join them to thy faithful few,
Be to them a refuge too.

VI. *Earthly Prospects deceitful.*

1 Oft in vain the voice of truth
Solemnly and loudly warns;
Thoughtless, unexperienc'd youth,
Though it hears, the warning scorns:
Youth in fancy's glass surveys
Life prolong'd to distant years,
While the vast imagin'd space
Fill'd with sweets and joys appears.

2 Awful disappointment soon
Overclouds the prospect gay;
Some their sun goes down at noon,
Torn by death's strong hand away:
Where are then their pleasing schemes?
Where the joys they hop'd to find?
Gone for ever, like their dreams,
Leaving not a trace behind.

3 Others, who are spar'd a while,
Live to weep o'er fancy's cheat;
Find distress, and pain, and toil,
Bitter things instead of sweet:
Sin has spread a curse around,
Poison'd all things here below;
On this base, polluted ground
Peace and joy can never grow.

4 Grace alone can cure our ills,
Sweeten life with all its cares,
Regulate our stubborn wills,
Save us from surrounding snares:
Though you oft have heard in vain,
Former years in folly spent,
Grace invites you yet again,
Once more calls you to repent.

5 Call'd again, at length beware,
Hear the Saviour's voice and live;
Lest he in his wrath should swear,
He no more will warning give:
Pray that you may hear and feel,
Ere the day of grace be past;
Lest your hearts grow hard as steel,
Or this year should prove your last.

HYMNS

BEFORE ANNUAL SERMONS TO YOUNG PEOPLE, ON NEW-YEARS' EVENINGS

VII. *Prayer for a Blessing.*

1 Now, gracious Lord, thine arm reveal,
And make thy glory known;
Now let us all thy presence feel,
And soften hearts of stone!

2 Help us to venture near thy throne,
And plead a Saviour's name;
For all that we can call our own,
Is vanity and shame.

3 From all the guilt of former sin
May mercy set us free;
And let the year we now begin,
Begin and end with thee.

4 Send down thy Spirit from above,
That saints may love thee more;
And sinners now may learn to love,
Who never lov'd before.

5 And when before thee we appear,
In our eternal home,
May growing numbers worship here,
And praise thee in our room.

VIII. C. *Another.*

1 Bestow, dear Lord, upon our youth
The gift of saving grace;
And let the seed of sacred truth
Fall in a fruitful place.

2 Grace is a plant, where'er it grows,
Of pure and heav'nly root;
But fairest in the youngest shows,
And yields the sweetest fruit.

3 Ye careless ones, O hear betimes
The voice of sov'reign love!
Your youth is stain'd with many crimes,
But mercy reigns above.

4 True, you are young, but there's a stone
Within the youngest breast,
Or half the crimes which you have done,
Would rob you of your rest.

5 For you the public pray'r is made,
Oh! join the public pray'r!
For you the secret tear is shed,
O shed yourselves a tear!

6 We pray that you may early prove
The Spirit's pow'r to teach;
You cannot be too young to love
That Jesus whom we preach.

IX. *Another.*

1 Now may fervent pray'r arise,
Wing'd with faith, and pierce the skies;
Fervent pray'r shall bring us down
Gracious answers from the throne.

2 Bless, O Lord, the op'ning year,
To each soul assembled here;
Clothe thy word with pow'r divine,
Make us willing to be thine.

3 Shepherd of thy blood-bought sheep!
Teach the stony heart to weep;
Let the blind have eyes to see,
See themselves, and look on thee!

4 Let the minds of all our youth
Feel the force of sacred truth;
While the Gospel call they hear,
May they learn to love and fear.

5 Show them what their ways have been,
Show them the desert of sin;
Then thy dying love reveal,
This shall melt a heart of steel.

6 Where thou hast thy work begun,
Give new strength the race to run;
Scatter darkness, doubts, and fears,
Wipe away the mourners' tears.

7 Bless us all, both old and young;
Call forth praise from ev'ry tongue;
Let the whole assembly prove
All thy power, and all thy love.

X. *Casting the Gospel Net.*

1 When Peter, through the tedious night,*
Had often cast his net in vain;
Soon as the Lord appear'd in sight,
He gladly let it down again.

2 Once more the Gospel net we cast,
Do thou, O Lord, the effort own;
We learn, from disappointments past,
To rest our hope on thee alone.

3 Upheld by thy supporting hand,
We enter on another year;
And now we meet at thy command,
To seek thy gracious presence here.

4 May this be a much-favour'd hour
To souls in Satan's bondage led;
O clothe thy word with sov'reign pow'r,
To break the rocks, and raise the dead!

5 Have mercy on our num'rous youth,
Who, young in years, are old in sin;
And by thy Spirit, and thy truth,
Show them the state their souls are in.

6 Then, by a Saviour's dying love,
To ev'ry wounded heart reveal'd,
Temptations, fears, and guilt remove,
And be their Sun, and Strength, and Shield.

7 To mourners speak a cheering word,
On seeking souls vouchsafe to shine;
Let poor backsliders be restor'd,
And all thy saints in praises join.

* Luke, v. 4.

8 O hear our pray'r, and give us hope,
That when thy voice shall call us home,
Thou still wilt raise a people up,
To love and praise thee in our room.

XI. C. *Pleading for and with Youth.*

1 Sin has undone our wretched race,
But Jesus has restor'd,
And brought the sinner face to face
With his forgiving Lord.

2 This we repeat, from year to year,
And press upon our youth;
Lord, give them an attentive ear,
Lord, save them by thy truth.

3 Blessings upon the rising race!
Make this a happy hour,
According to thy richest grace,
And thine almighty pow'r.

4 We feel for your unhappy state,
(May you regard it too,)
And would a while ourselves forget
To pour out pray'r for you.

5 We see, though you perceive it not,
Th' approaching awful doom;
O tremble at the solemn thought,
And flee the wrath to come!

6 Dear Saviour, let this new-born year
Spread an alarm abroad,
And cry, in ev'ry careless ear,
"Prepare to meet thy God!"

XII. C. *Prayer for Children.*

1 GRACIOUS Lord, our children see,
By thy mercy we are free;
But shall these, alas! remain,
Subjects still of Satan's reign:
Israel's young ones, when of old
Pharaoh threat'ned to withhold;*
Then thy messenger said, "No;
"Let the children also go."

2 When the angel of the Lord,
Drawing forth his dreadful sword,
Slew, with an avenging hand,
All the first-born of the land;
Then thy people's doors he pass'd,
Where the bloody sign was plac'd;†
Hear us, now, upon our knees,
Plead the blood of Christ for these!

3 Lord, we tremble, for we know
How the fierce, malicious foe,
Wheeling round his watchful flight,
Keeps them ever in his sight:
Spread thy pinions, King of kings;
Hide them safe beneath thy wings;
Lest the rav'nous bird of prey
Stoop, and bear the brood away.

XIII. *The Shunamite.*‡

1 THE Shunamite, oppress'd with grief,
When she had lost the son she lov'd,
Went to Elisha for relief,
Nor vain her application prov'd.

* Exodus, x. 9. † Exodus, xii. 13. ‡ 2 Kings, iv. 31.

2 He sent his servant on before,
To lay a staff upon his head;
This he could do, but do no more;
He left him, as he found him, dead.

3 But when the Lord's almighty pow'r
Wrought with the prophet's pray'r and faith,
The mother saw a joyful hour,
She saw her child restor'd from death.

4 Thus, like the weeping Shunamite,
For many dead in sin we grieve;
Now, Lord, display thine arm of might,
Cause them to hear thy voice and live.

5 Thy preachers bear the staff in vain,
Though at thine own command we go;
Lord, we have try'd and try'd again,
We find them dead, and leave them so.

6 Come then thyself—to ev'ry heart
The glory of thy name make known;
The means are our appointed part,
The pow'r and grace are thine alone.

XIV. *Elijah's Prayer.* *

1 Does it not grief and wonder move,
To think of Israel's shameful fall?
Who needed miracles to prove
Whether the Lord was God, or Baal!

2 Methinks I see Elijah stand,
His features glow with love and zeal;
In faith and pray'r he lifts his hand,
And makes to Heav'n his great appeal.

* 1 Kings, xviii.

3 "O God! if I thy servant am,
"If 'tis thy message fills my heart,
"Now glorify thy holy name,
"And show this people who thou art!"

4 He spake, and, lo! a sudden flame
Consum'd the wood, the dust, the stone;
The people struck, at once proclaim,
"The Lord is God, the Lord alone."

5 Like him, we mourn an awful day,
When more for Baal than God appear;
Like him, believers, let us pray,
And may the God of Israel hear!

6 Lord, if thy servant speak thy truth,
If he indeed is sent by thee;
Confirm the word to all our youth,
And let them thy salvation see.

7 Now may thy Spirit's holy fire
Pierce ev'ry heart that hears thy word,
Consume each hurtful, vain desire,
And make them know thou art the Lord.

XV. *Preaching to the dry Bones.**

1 PREACHERS may from Ezekiel's case,
Draw hope in this declining day:
A proof, like this, of sov'reign grace
Should chase our unbelief away.

2 When sent to preach to mould'ring bones,
Who could have thought he would succeed?
But well he knew the Lord from stones
Could raise up Abr'ham's chosen seed.

* Ezek. xxxvii.

3 Can these be made a num'rous host,
And such dry bones new life receive?
The prophet answer'd, "Lord thou know'st
"They shall, if thou commandment give."

4 Like him around I cast my eye,
And oh! what heaps of bones appear;
Like him, by Jesus sent, I'll try,
For he can cause the dead to hear.

5 Hear, ye dry bones, the Saviour's word!
He, who when dying gasp'd, "Forgive,"
That gracious sinner-loving Lord,
Says, "Look to me, dry bones, and live."

6 Thou heav'nly wind awake and blow,
In answer to the pray'r of faith;
Now thine almighty influence show,
And fill dry bones with living breath.

7 O make them hear, and feel, and shake,
And, at thy call, obedient move;
The bonds of death and Satan break,
And bone to bone unite in love.

XVI. *The Rod of Moses.*

1 When Moses wav'd his mystic rod,
What wonders follow'd while he spoke!
Firm as a wall the waters stood, *
Or gush'd in rivers from the rock. †

2 At his command the thunders roll'd,
Lightning and hail his voice obey'd, ‡
And Pharaoh trembled to behold
His land in desolation laid.

* Exod. xiv. 21. † Num. xx. 11. ‡ Exod. ix. 23.

3 But what could Moses' rod have done
Had he not been divinely sent?
The pow'r was from the Lord alone,
And Moses but the instrument.

4 O Lord, regard thy people's pray'rs!
Assist a worm to preach aright:
And, since thy Gospel rod he bears,
Display thy wonders in our sight.

5 Proclaim the thunders of thy law,
Like lightning let thine arrows fly,
That careless sinners, struck with awe,
For refuge may to Jesus cry.

6 Make streams of godly sorrow flow
From rocky hearts, unus'd to feel;
And let the poor in spirit know
That thou art near, their griefs to heal.

7 But chiefly, we would now look up
To ask a blessing for our youth,
The rising generations hope,
That they may know and love thy truth.

8 Arise, O Lord, afford a sign,
Now shall our pray'rs success obtain;
Since both the means and pow'r are thine
How can the rod be rais'd in vain?

XVII. *God speaking from Mount Zion.*

1 THE God who once to Israel spoke
From Sinai's top, in fire and smoke,
In gentler strains of Gospel grace
Invites us now to seek his face.

2 He wears no terrors on his brow,
He speaks, in love, from Zion now;
It is the voice of Jesus' blood
Calling poor wand'rers home to God.

3 The holy Moses quak'd and fear'd
When Sinai's thund'ring law he heard;
But reigning grace, with accents mild,
Speaks to the sinner as a child.

4 Hark! how from Calvary it sounds,
From the Redeemer's bleeding wounds!
"Pardon and grace I freely give,
"Poor sinner, look to me, and live."

5 What other arguments can move
The heart that slights a Saviour's love!
Yet, till almighty pow'r constrain,
This matchless love is preach'd in vain.

6 O Saviour, let that pow'r be felt,
And cause each stony heart to melt!
Deeply impress upon your youth
The light and force of Gospel truth.

7 With this new year may they begin
To live to thee and die to sin;
To enter by the narrow way
Which leads to everlasting day.

8 How will they else thy presence bear
When, as a Judge, thou shalt appear!
When slighted love to wrath shall turn,
And the whole earth like Sinai burn!

XVIII. *A Prayer for Power on the Means of Grace.*

1 O THOU, at whose almighty word
The glorious light from darkness sprung!
Thy quick'ning influence afford,
And clothe with pow'r the preacher's tongue.

2 Though 'tis thy truth he hopes to speak,
He cannot give the hearing ear;
'Tis thine the stubborn heart to break,
And make the careless sinner fear.

3 As when, of old, the water flow'd
Forth from the rock at thy command;*
Moses in vain had wav'd his rod,
Without thy wonder-working hand.

4 As when the walls of Jericho,
Down to the earth at once were cast;†
It was thy pow'r that brought them low,
And not the trumpet's feeble blast.

5 Thus we would in the means be found,
And thus on thee alone depend;
To make the Gospel's joyful sound
Effectual to the promis'd end.

6 Now, while we hear thy word of grace,
Let self and pride before it fall;
And rocky hearts dissolve apace,
In streams of sorrow at thy call.

7 On all our youth assembled here
The unction of thy Spirit pour;
Nor let them lose another year,
Lest thou shouldst strive and call no more.

* Numbers, xx. 11. † Joshua, vi. 20.

XIX. *Elijah's Mantle.* 2 Kings, ii. 11—14.

1 Elisha, struck with grief and awe,
Cry'd, "Ah! where now is Israel's stay?"
When he his honour'd master saw
Borne by a fiery car away.

2 But while he look'd a last adieu,
His mantle, as it fell, he caught;
The Spirit rested on him too,
And equal miracles he wrought.

3 "Where is Elijah's God?" he cried,
And with the mantle smote the flood;
His word controll'd the swelling tide,
Th' obedient waters upright stood.

4 The wonder-working Gospel thus,
From hand to hand, has been convey'd;
We have the mantle still with us,
But where, O where the Spirit's aid.

5 When Peter first his mantle wav'd,*
How soon it melted hearts of steel!
Sinners, by thousands, then were sav'd,
But now how few its virtues feel!

6 Where is Elijah's God, the Lord!
Thine Israel's hope, and joy, and boast!
Reveal thine arm, confirm thy word,
Give us another Pentecost!

7 Assist thy messenger to speak,
And, while he aims to lisp thy truth,
The bonds of sin and Satan break,
And pour thy blessing on our youth.

* Acts, ii.

8 For them we now approach thy throne,
Teach them to know and love thy name;
Then shall thy thankful people own
Elijah's God is still the same.

HYMNS

AFTER SERMONS TO YOUNG PEOPLE, ON NEW YEARS' EVENINGS, SUITED TO THE SUBJECTS.

XX. *David's Charge to Solomon.* 1 Chron. xxviii. 9.

1 O DAVID's Son, and David's Lord!
From age to age thou art the same;
Thy gracious presence now afford,
And teach our youth to know thy name.

2 Thy people, Lord, though oft distrest,
Upheld by thee thus far are come;
And now we long to see thy rest,
And wait thy word to call us home.

3 Like David, when this life shall end,
We trust in thee sure peace to find;
Like him to thee we now commend
The children we must leave behind.

4 Ere long, we hope to be where care,
And sin, and sorrow never come;
But, oh! accept our humble pray'r,
That these may praise thee in our room.

5 Show them how vile they are by sin,
And wash them in thy cleansing blood;
Oh! make them willing to be thine,
And be to them a cov'nant God.

6 Long may thy light and truth remain,
To bless this place when we are gone;
And numbers here be born again,
To dwell for ever near thy throne.

XXI. *The Lord's Call to his Children.* 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18.

1 Let us adore the grace that seeks
To draw our hearts above!
Attend, 'tis God the Saviour speaks,
And ev'ry word is love.

2 Though fill'd with awe, before his throne
Each angel veils his face;
He claims a people for his own
Amongst our sinful race.

3 Careless, a while they live in sin,
Enslav'd to Satan's power;
But they obey the call divine,
In his appointed hour.

4 "Come forth," he says, "no more pursue
"The paths that lead to death;
"Look up, a bleeding Saviour view,
"Look, and be sav'd by faith.

5 "My sons and daughters you shall be
"Through the atoning blood;
"And you shall claim, and find in me,
"A Father, and a God."

6 Lord, speak these words to ev'ry heart,
By thine all-powerful voice;
That we may now from sin depart,
And make thy love our choice.

7 If now we learn to seek thy face
By Christ the living way;
We'll praise thee for this hour of grace,
Through an eternal day.

XXII. *The prayer of Jabez.* 1 Chron. iv. 9, 10.

1 Jesus, who bought us with his blood,
And makes our souls his care,
Was known of old as Israel's God,
And answer'd Jabez' pray'r.

2 Jabez! a child of grief! the name
Befits poor sinners well;
For Jesus bore the cross and shame,
To save our souls from hell.

3 Teach us, O Lord, like him to plead
For mercies from above:
O come, and bless our souls indeed,
With light, and joy, and love.

4 The Gospel's promis'd land is wide,
We fain would enter in;
But we are press'd on ev'ry side
With unbelief and sin.

5 Arise, O Lord, enlarge our coast,
Let us possess the whole,
That Satan may no longer boast,
He can thy work control.

6 Oh! may thy hand be with us still,
Our guide and guardian be,
To keep us safe from ev'ry ill,
Till death shall set us free.

7 Help us on thee to cast our care,
And on thy word to rest,
That Israel's God, who heareth pray'r,
Will grant us our request.

XXIII. *Waiting at Wisdom's Gates.* Prov. viii. 34, 35.

1 Ensnar'd too long my heart has been
In folly's hurtful ways;
Oh! may I now, at length, begin
To hear what Wisdom says!

2 'Tis Jesus, from the mercy-seat,
Invites me to his rest;
He calls poor sinners to his feet,
To make them truly blest.

3 Approach, my soul, to Wisdom's gates,
While it is call'd to-day;
No one who watches there, and waits,
Shall e'er be turn'd away.

4 He will not let me seek in vain;
For all who trust his word
Shall everlasting life obtain,
And favour from the Lord.

5 Lord, I have hated thee too long,
And dar'd thee to thy face;
I've done my soul exceeding wrong
In slighting all thy grace.

6 Now I would break my league with death,
And live to thee alone;
Oh! let thy Spirit's seal of faith
Secure me for thine own.

7 Let all the saints assembled here,
Yea, let all heav'n rejoice,
That I begin with this new year
To make the Lord my choice.

XXIV. *Asking the Way to Zion.* Jer. l. 5.

1 Zion, the city of our God,
How glorious is the place!
The Saviour there has his abode,
And sinners see his face!

2 Firm against ev'ry adverse shock,
Its mighty bulwarks prove;
'Tis built upon the living Rock,
And wall'd around with love.

3 There all the fruits of glory grow,
And joys that never die;
And streams of grace and knowledge flow,
The soul to satisfy.

4 Come, set your faces Zion-ward,
The sacred road inquire;
And let a union to the Lord
Be henceforth your desire.

5 The Gospel shines to give you light;
No longer, then, delay;
The Spirit waits to guide you right,
And Jesus is the way.

6 O Lord, regard thy people's pray'r,
Thy promise now fulfil;
And young and old by grace prepare
To dwell on Zion's hill.

XXV. *We were Pharaoh's Bondmen.* Deut. vi. 20—23.

1 Beneath the tyrant Satan's yoke,
Our souls were long opprest;
Till grace our galling fetters broke,
And gave the weary rest.

2 Jesus, in that important hour,
His mighty arm made known;
He ransom'd us by price and pow'r,
And claim'd us for his own.

3 Now, freed from bondage, sin, and death,
We walk in wisdom's ways;
And wish to spend our ev'ry breath,
In wonder, love, and praise.

4 Ere long, we hope with him to dwell
In yonder world above;
And now we only live to tell
The riches of his love.

5 O might we, ere we hence remove,
Prevail upon our youth
To seek, that they may likewise prove,
His mercy and his truth.

6 Like Simeon, we shall gladly go,*
When Jesus calls us home;
If they are left a seed below,
To serve him in our room.

7 Lord, hear our pray'r, indulge our hope,
On these thy Spirit pour,
That they may take our story up,
When we can speak no more.

* Luke, ii. 29.

XXVI. *Travailing in Birth for Souls.* Gal. iv. 19.

1 What contradictions meet
In ministers' employ!
It is a bitter sweet,
A sorrow full of joy:
No other post affords a place
For equal honour or disgrace!

2 Who can describe the pain
Which faithful preachers feel,
Constrain'd to speak in vain,
To hearts as hard as steel!
Or who can tell the pleasures felt,
When stubborn hearts begin to melt!

3 The Saviour's dying love,
The soul's amazing worth,
Their utmost efforts move,
And draw their bowels forth:
They pray and strive, their rest departs,
Till Christ be form'd in sinners' hearts.

4 If some small hope appear,
They still are not content;
But with a jealous fear,
They watch for the event:
Too oft they find their hopes deceiv'd,
Then how their inmost souls are griev'd!

5 But when their pains succeed,
And from the tender blade
The rip'ning ears proceed,
Their toils are overpaid:
No harvest-joy can equal theirs,
To find the fruit of all their cares.

6 On what has now been sown,
Thy blessing, Lord, bestow;
The pow'r is thine alone,
To make it spring and grow:
Do thou the gracious harvest raise,
And thou alone shalt have the praise.

XXVII. *We are Ambassadors for Christ.* 2 Cor. v. 20.

1 Thy message by the preacher seal,
And let thy pow'r be known,
That ev'ry sinner here may feel
The word is not his own.

2 Amongst the foremost of the throng,
Who dare thee to thy face,
He in rebellion stood too long,
And fought against thy grace.

3 But grace prevail'd, he mercy found,
And now by thee is sent,
To tell his fellow-rebels round,
And call them to repent.

4 In Jesus, God is reconcil'd,
The worst may be forgiv'n;
Come, and he'll own you as a child,
And make you heir of heav'n.

5 Oh! may the word of Gospel truth
Your chief desires engage!
And Jesus be your guide in youth,
Your joy in hoary age.

6 Perhaps the year that's now begun
May prove to some their last;
The sands of life may soon be run,
The day of grace be past.

7 Think, if you slight this embassy,
And will not warning take,
When Jesus in the clouds you see,
What answer will you make?

XXVIII. *Paul's farewell Charge.* Acts, xx. 26, 27.

1 When Paul was parted from his friends
It was a weeping day;
But Jesus made them all amends,
And wip'd their tears away.

2 Ere long they met again with joy,
Secure no more to part,
Where praises ev'ry tongue employ,
And pleasure fills each heart.

3 Thus all the preachers of his grace
Their children soon shall meet:
Together see their Saviour's face,
And worship at his feet.

4 But they who heard the word in vain,
Though oft and plainly warn'd,
Will tremble, when they meet again
The ministers they scorn'd.

5 On your own heads your blood will fall,
If any perish here;
The preachers who have told you all,
Shall stand approv'd and clear.

6 Yet, Lord, to save themselves alone,
Is not their utmost view;
Oh! hear their pray'r, thy message own,
And save their hearers too.

XXIX. *How shall I put thee among the Children?* Jer. iii. 19.

1 Alas! by nature how deprav'd,
How prone to ev'ry ill!
Our lives to Satan how enslav'd,
How obstinate our will!

2 And can such sinners be restor'd,
Such rebels reconcil'd!
Can grace itself the means afford
To make a foe a child?

3 Yes, grace has found the wondrous means
Which shall effectual prove,
To cleanse us from our countless sins,
And teach our hearts to love.

4 Jesus for sinners undertakes,
And died that they may live;
His blood a full atonement makes,
And cries aloud, "Forgive."

5 Yet one thing more must grace provide,
To bring us home to God,
Or we shall slight the Lord, who died,
And trample on his blood.

6 The Holy Spirit must reveal
The Saviour's work and worth;
Then the hard heart begins to feel
A new and heav'nly birth.

7 Thus bought with blood, and born again,
Redeem'd, and sav'd by grace,
Rebels in God's own house obtain
A son's and daughter's place.

XXX. *Winter.* *

1 See, how rude winter's icy hand
Has stripp'd the trees and seal'd the ground!
But spring shall soon his rage withstand,
And spread new beauties all around.

2 My soul a sharper winter mourns,
Barren and fruitless I remain;
When will the gentle spring return,
And bid my graces grow again?

3 Jesus, my glorious Sun, arise!
'Tis thine the frozen heart to move;
Oh! hush these storms, and clear my skies,
And let me feel thy vital love!

4 Dear Lord, regard my feeble cry,
I faint and droop till thou appear;
Wilt thou permit thy plant to die?
Must it be winter all the year?

5 Be still, my soul, and wait this hour,
With humble pray'r, and patient faith;
Till he reveals his gracious pow'r,
Repose on what his promise saith.

6 He, by whose all-commanding word †
Seasons their changing course maintain,
In ev'ry change a pledge affords,
That none shall seek his face in vain.

* Book III. Hymn 31. † Genesis, viii. 22.

XXXI. *Waiting for Spring.*

1 Though cloudy skies, and northern blasts,
Retard the gentle spring a while;
The sun will conqu'ror prove at last,
And nature wear a vernal smile.

2 The promise which, from age to age,
Has brought the changing seasons round,
Again shall calm the winter's rage,
Perfume the air, and paint the ground.

3 The virtue of that first command,
I know still does and will prevail,
That while the earth itself shall stand,
The spring and summer shall not fail.

4 Such changes are for us decreed;
Believers have their winters too;
But spring shall certainly succeed,
And all their former life renew.

5 Winter and spring have each their use,
And each, in turn, his people know;
One kills the weeds their hearts produce,
The other makes their graces grow.

6 Though like dead trees a while they seem,
Yet having life within their root,
The welcome spring's reviving beam
Draws forth their blossoms, leaves, and fruit.

7 But if the tree indeed be dead,
It feels no change, though spring return;
Its leafless, naked, barren head,
Proclaims it only fit to burn.

8 Dear Lord, afford our souls a spring,
Thou know'st our winter has been long;
Shine forth, and warm our hearts to sing,
And thy rich grace shall be our song.

XXXII. *Spring.*

1 Bleak winter is subdu'd at length,
And forc'd to yield the day;
The sun has wasted all his strength,
And driven him away.

2 And now long wish'd-for spring is come,
How alter'd is the scene!
The trees and shrubs are dress'd in bloom,
The earth array'd in green.

3 Where'er we tread, beneath our feet
The clust'ring flowers spring;
The artless birds, in concert sweet,
Invite our hearts to sing.

4 But, ah! in vain I strive to join,
Oppress'd with sin and doubt;
I feel 'tis winter still within,
Though all is spring without.

5 Oh! would my Saviour from on high
Break through these clouds and shine!
No creature then more blest than I,
No song more loud than mine.

6 Till then—no softly-warbling thrush,
Nor cowslip's sweet perfume,
Nor beauties of each painted bush,
Can dissipate my gloom.

7 To Adam, soon as he transgress'd,
Thus Eden bloom'd in vain;
Not Paradise could give him rest,
Or soothe his heart-felt pain.

8 Yet here an emblem I perceive
Of what the Lord can do;
Dear Saviour, help me to believe,
That I may flourish too.

9 Thy word can soon my hopes revive,
Can overcome my foes,
And make my languid graces thrive,
And blossom like the rose.

XXXIII. *Another.*

1 PLEASING spring again is here!
Trees and fields in bloom appear!
Hark! the birds, with artless lays,
Warble their Creator's praise!
Where, in winter, all was snow,
Now the flow'rs in clusters grow;
And the corn, in green array,
Promises a harvest day.

2 What a change has taken place!
Emblem of the spring of grace;
How the soul, in winter, mourns
Till the Lord, the Sun, returns;
Till the Spirit's gentle rain
Bids the heart revive again;
Then the stone is turn'd to flesh,
And each grace springs forth afresh.

3 Lord, afford a spring to me!
Let me feel like what I see!
Ah! my winter has been long,
Chill'd my hopes, and stopp'd my song!
Winter threaten'd to destroy
Faith and love and ev'ry joy;
If thy life was in the root,
Still I could not yield thee fruit.

4 Speak, and by thy gracious voice
Make my drooping soul rejoice;
O beloved Saviour, haste,
Tell me, all the storms are past:
On thy garden deign to smile,
Raise the plants, enrich the soil;
Soon thy presence will restore
Life to what seem'd dead before.

5 Lord, I long to be at home,
Where these changes never come!
Where the saints no winter fear,
Where 'tis spring throughout the year:
How unlike this state below!
There the flow'rs unwith'ring blow;
There no chilling blasts annoy;
All is love, and bloom, and joy.

XXXIV. *Summer Storms.* *

1 Though the morn may be serene,
Not a threat'ning cloud be seen,
Who can undertake to say
'Twill be pleasant all the day?

* Book III. Hymn 68.

Tempests suddenly may rise,
Darkness overspread the skies,
Lightnings flash, and thunders roar,
Ere a short-liv'd day be o'er.

2 Often thus the child of grace
Enters on his Christian race;
Guilt and fear are overborne,
'Tis with him a summer's morn;
While his new-felt joys abound,
All things seem to smile around;
And he hopes it will be fair,
All the day, and all the year.

3 Should we warn him of a change,
He would think the caution strange;
He no change or trouble fears,
Till the gathering storm appears; *
Till dark clouds his sun conceal,
Till temptation's pow'r he feel;
Then he trembles and looks pale,
All his hopes and courage fail.

4 But the wonder-working Lord
Soothes the tempest by his word;
Stills the thunder, stops the rain,
And his sun breaks forth again:
Soon the cloud again returns,
Now he joys, and now he mourns;
Oft his sky is overcast,
Ere the day of life be past.

5 Try'd believers too can say,
In the course of one short day,
Though the morning has been fair,
Prov'd a golden hour of pray'r,

* Book I. Hymn 44.

Sin and Satan, long ere night,
Have their comforts put to flight;
Ah! what heart-felt peace and joy
Unexpected storms destroy.

6 Dearest Saviour, call us soon
To thine high eternal noon;
Never there shall tempest rise,
To conceal thee from our eyes:
Satan shall no more deceive,
We no more thy Spirit grieve;
But through cloudless, endless days,
Sound to golden harps thy praise.

XXXV. *Hay-time.*

1 The grass, and flow'rs, which clothe the field,
And look so green and gay,
Touch'd by the sithe, defenceless yield,
And fall, and fade away,

2 Fit emblem of our mortal state!
Thus in the Scripture glass,
The young, the strong, the wise, the great,
May see themselves but grass. *

3 Ah! trust not to your fleeting breath,
Nor call your time your own;
Around you see the sithe of death
Is mowing thousands down.

4 And you, who hitherto are spar'd,
Must shortly yield your lives;
Your wisdom is, to be prepar'd
Before the stroke arrives.

* Isaiah, xl. 7.

5 The grass, when dead, revives no more;
You die to live again;
But, oh! if death should prove the door
To everlasting pain.

6 Lord, help us to obey thy call,
That, from our sins set free,
When like the grass our bodies fall,
Our souls may spring to thee.

XXXVI. *Harvest.*

1 See! the corn again in ear!
How the fields and valleys smile!
Harvest now is drawing near,
To repay the farmer's toil:
Gracious Lord, secure the crop,
Satisfy the poor with food;
In thy mercy is our hope,
We have sinn'd, but thou art good.

2 While I view the plenteous grain
As it ripens on the stalk,
May I not instruction gain,
Helpful to my daily walk?
All this plenty of the field
Was produc'd from foreign seeds;
For the earth itself would yield
Only crops of useless weeds.

3 Though, when newly sown, it lay
Hid a while beneath the ground,
(Some might think it thrown away,)
Now a large increase is found:
Though conceal'd, it was not lost,
Though it dy'd, it lives again;
Eastern storms, and nipping frosts,
Have oppos'd its growth in vain.

4 Let the praise be all the Lord's,
As the benefit is ours!
He, in season, still affords
Kindly heat, and gentle show'rs:
By his care the produce thrives,
Waving o'er the furrow'd lands;
And when harvest time arrives,
Ready for the reaper stands.

5 Thus in barren hearts he sows
Precious seeds of heav'nly joy; *
Sin and hell in vain oppose,
None can grace's crop destroy:
Threat'ned oft, though still it blooms,
After many changes past,
Death, the reaper, when he comes,
Finds it fully ripe at last.

CHRISTMAS.

XXXVII. *Praise for the Incarnation.*

1 Sweeter sounds than music knows
Charm me in Immanuel's name;
All her hopes my spirit owes
To his birth, and cross, and shame.

2 When he came, the angels sung,
"Glory be to God on high;"
Lord, unloose my stamm'ring tongue,
Who should louder sing than I?

3 Did the Lord a man become,
That he might the law fulfil,
Bleed and suffer in my room,
And canst thou, my tongue, be still?

* Hosea, xiv. 7.; Mark, iv. 26—29.

4 No, I must my praises bring,
Though they worthless are and weak;
For should I refuse to sing,
Sure the very stones would speak.

5 O my Saviour, Shield, and Sun,
Shepherd, Brother, Husband, Friend,
Ev'ry precious name in one,
I will love thee without end.

XXXVIII. C. *Jehovah-Jesus.*

1 My song shall bless the Lord of all,
My praise shall climb to his abode;
Thee, Saviour, by that name I call,
The great, supreme, the mighty God.

2 Without beginning or decline,
Object of faith, and not of sense;
Eternal ages saw him shine,
He shines eternal ages hence.

3 As much, when in the manger laid,
Almighty Ruler of the sky,
As when the six days' work he made
Fill'd all the morning stars with joy.

4 Of all the crowns Jehovah bears,
Salvation is his dearest claim;
That gracious sound well pleas'd he hears,
And owns Immanuel for his name.

5 A cheerful confidence I feel,
My well-plac'd hopes with joy I see:
My bosom glows with heav'nly zeal
To worship him who died for me.

6 As man, he pities my complaint,
His pow'r and truth are all divine;
He will not fail, he cannot faint,
Salvation's sure, and must be mine.

XXXIX. *Man honoured above Angels.*

1 Now let us join with hearts and tongues,
And emulate the angels' songs;
Yea, sinners may address their King
In songs that angels cannot sing.

2 They praise the Lamb who once was slain;*
But we can add a higher strain;
Not only say, "He suffer'd thus,
"But that he suffer'd all for us."

3 When angels by transgression fell,
Justice consign'd them all to hell;
But Mercy form'd a wondrous plan,
To save and honour fallen man.

4 Jesus, who pass'd the angels by,
Assum'd our flesh to bleed and die;†
And still he makes it his abode;
As man he fills the throne of God.

5 Our next of kin, our Brother now,
Is he to whom the angels bow;
They join with us to praise his name,
But we the nearest int'rest claim.

6 But, ah! how faint our praises rise!
Sure, 'tis the wonder of the skies,
That we, who share his richest love,
So cold and unconcern'd should prove.

* Rev. v. † Heb. ii. 16.

7 Oh, glorious hour, it comes with speed!
When we, from sin and darkness freed,
Shall see the God who died for man,
And praise him more than angels can. *

XL. *Saturday Evening.*

1 Safely through another week,
God has brought us on our way;
Let us now a blessing seek,
On th' approaching Sabbath-day:
Day of all the week the best,
Emblem of eternal rest.

2 Mercies multiply'd each hour
Through the week our praise demand;
Guarded by Almighty pow'r,
Fed and guided by his hand:
Though ungrateful we have been,
Only made returns of sin.

3 While we pray for pard'ning grace,
Through the dear Redeemer's name,
Show thy reconciled face,
Shine away our sin and shame:
From our worldly care set free,
May we rest this night with thee.

4 When the morn shall bid us rise,
May we feel thy presence near!
May thy glory meet our eyes
When we in thy house appear!
There afford us, Lord, a taste
Of our everlasting feast.

* Book III. Hymn 88.

5 May thy Gospel's joyful sound
Conquer sinners, comfort saints;
Make the fruits of grace abound,
Bring relief for all complaints:
Thus may all our Sabbaths prove,
Till we join the church above!

THE CLOSE OF THE YEAR.

XLI. *Ebenezer.* *

1 The Lord, our salvation and light,
The guide of our strength and our days,
Has brought us together to-night,
A new Ebenezer to raise:
The year we have now passed through,
His goodness with blessings has crown'd;
Each morning his mercies were new;
Then let our thanksgivings abound.

2 Encompass'd with dangers and snares,
Temptations, and fears, and complaints,
His ear he inclin'd to our pray'rs,
His hand open'd wide to our wants:
We never besought him in vain;
When burden'd with sorrow or sin,
He help'd us again and again,
Or where before now had we been?

3 His Gospel, throughout the long year,
From Sabbath to Sabbath he gave;
How oft has he met with us here,
And shown himself mighty to save?

* 1 Sam. vii. 12.

His candlestick has been remov'd
From churches once privileg'd thus;
But though we unworthy have prov'd,
It still is continu'd to us.

4 For so many mercies receiv'd,
Alas! what returns have we made?
His Spirit we often have griev'd,
And evil for good have repaid,
How well it becomes us to cry,
"Oh! who is a God like to thee?
"Who passest iniquities by,
"And plungest them deep in the sea!"

5 To Jesus, who sits on the throne,
Our best hallelujahs we bring;
To thee it is owing alone
That we are permitted to sing:
Assist us, we pray, to lament
The sins of the year that is past;
And grant that the next may be spent
Far more to thy praise than the last.

XLII. *Another.*

1 Let hearts and tongues unite,
And loud thanksgivings raise:
'Tis duty, mingled with delight,
To sing the Saviour's praise.

2 To him we owe our breath,
He took us from the womb,
Which else had shut us up in death,
And prov'd an early tomb.

3 When on the breast we hung,
Our help was in the Lord;
'Twas he first taught our infant tongue
To form the lisping word.

4 When in our blood we lay,
He would not let us die,
Because his love had fix'd a day
To bring salvation nigh.

5 In childhood and in youth,
His eye was on us still:
Though strangers to his love and truth,
And prone to cross his will.

6 And since his name we knew,
How gracious has he been:
What dangers has he led us through,
What mercies have we seen!

7 Now through another year,
Supported by his care,
We raise our Ebenezer here,
"The Lord has help'd thus far."

8 Our lot in future years
Unable to foresee,
He kindly, to prevent our fears,
Says, "Leave it all to me."

9 Yea, Lord, we wish to cast
Our cares upon thy breast!
Help us to praise thee for the past,
And trust thee for the rest.

XLV. *The Lord's Day.*

1 How welcome to the saints, when press'd
With six days' noise, and care, and toil,
Is the returning day of rest,
Which hides them from the world a while?

2 Now from the throng withdrawn away,
They seem to breath a diff'rent air;
Compos'd and soft'ned by the day,
All things another aspect wear.

3 How happy if their lot is cast
Where statedly the Gospel sounds!
The word is honey to their taste,
Renews their strength, and heals their wounds!

4 Though pinch'd with poverty at home,
With sharp afflictions daily fed,
It makes amends, if they can come
To God's own house for heav'nly bread!

5 With joy they hasten to the place
Where they their Saviour oft have met;
And while they feast upon his grace,
Their burdens and their griefs forget.

6 This favour'd lot, my friends, is ours,
May we the privilege improve,
And find these consecrated hours
Sweet earnest of the joys above!

7 We thank thee for thy day, O Lord:
Here we thy promis'd presence seek;
Open thine hand, with blessings stor'd,
And give us manna for the week.

XLVI. *Gospel Privileges.*

1 O HAPPY they who know the Lord,
With whom he deigns to dwell!
He feeds and cheers them by his word,
His arm supports them well.

2 To them, in each distressing hour,
His throne of grace is near;
And when they plead his love and pow'r,
He stands engag'd to hear.

3 He help'd his saints in ancient days,
Who trusted in his name;
And we can witness, to his praise,
His love is still the same.

4 Wand'ring in sin, our souls he found,
And bid us seek his face;
Gave us to hear the Gospel sound,
And taste the Gospel grace.

5 Oft in his house his glory shines,
Before our wond'ring eyes;
We wish not then for golden mines,
Or aught beneath the skies.

6 His presence sweetens all our cares,
And makes our burdens light;
A word from him dispels our fears,
And gilds the gloom of night.

7 Lord, we expect to suffer here,
Nor would we dare repine;
But give us still to find thee near,
And own us still for thine.

8 Let us enjoy and highly prize
These tokens of thy love,
Till thou shalt bid our spirits rise,
To worship thee above.

XLVII. *Another.*

1 HAPPY are they to whom the Lord
His gracious name makes known!
And by his Spirit, and his word,
Adopts them for his own!

2 He calls them to his mercy seat,
And hears their humble pray'r;
And when within his house they meet,
Thy find his presence near.

3 The force of their united cries
No pow'r can long withstand;
For Jesus helps them from the skies,
By his almighty hand.

4 Then mountains sink at once to plains,
And light from darkness springs;
Each seeming loss improves their gains,
Each trouble comfort brings.

5 Though men despise them or revile,
They count the trial small;
Whoever frowns, if Jesus smile,
It makes amends for all.

6 Though meanly clad, and coarsely fed,
And, like their Saviour, poor;
They would not change their Gospel bread
For all the worldling's store.

7 When cheer'd with faith's sublimer joys,
They mount on eagles' wings;
They can disdain, as children's toys,
The pride and pomp of kings.

8 Dear Lord, assist our souls to pay
The debt of praise we owe,
That we enjoy a Gospel day,
And heav'n begun below.

XLVIII. *Praise for the Continuance of the Gospel.**

1 Once, while we aim'd at Zion's songs,
A sudden mourning check'd our tongues!
Then we were call'd to sow in tears
The seeds of joy for future years.

2 Oft as that memorable hour
The changing year brings round again,
We meet to praise the love and pow'r
Which heard our cries, and eas'd our pain.

3 Come, ye who trembled for the ark,
Unite in praise for answer'd pray'r!
Did not the Lord our sorrows mark?
Did not our sighing reach his ear?

4 Then smaller griefs were laid aside,
And all our cares summ'd up in one;
"Let us but have thy word," we cry'd,
"In other things thy will be done."

* Wherever a separation is threatened between a minister and people who dearly love each other, this hymn may be as seasonable as it was once in Olney.

5 Since he has granted our request,
And we still hear the Gospel voice;
Although by many trials prest,
In this we can and will rejoice.

6 Though to our lot temptations fall,
Though pain, and want, and cares annoy;
The precious Gospel sweetens all,
And yields us med'cine, food, and joy.

XLIX. *A Famine of the Word.*

1 Gladness was spread through Israel's host
When first they manna view'd;
They labour'd who should gather most,
And thought it pleasant food.

2 But when they had it long enjoy'd,
From day to day the same,
Their hearts were by the plenty cloy'd,
Although from heav'n it came.

3 Thus Gospel bread at first is priz'd,
And makes a people glad;
But afterwards too much despis'd,
When easy to be had:

4 But should the Lord, displeas'd, withhold
The bread his mercy sends;
To have our houses fill'd with gold
Would make but poor amends.

5 How tedious would the week appear,
How dull the Sabbath prove,
Could we no longer meet to hear
The precious truths we love?

6 How would believing parents bear,
To leave their heedless youth
Expos'd to ev'ry fatal snare,
Without the light of truth?

7 The Gospel, and a praying few,
Our bulwark long have prov'd;
But Olney sure the day will rue
When these shall be remov'd.

8 Then sin in this once-favour'd town,
Will triumph unrestrain'd;
And wrath and vengeance hasten down,
No more by pray'r detain'd:

9 Preserve us from this judgement, Lord,
For Jesus' sake we plead;
A famine of the Gospel word
Would be a stroke indeed!

L. *Prayer for Ministers.*

1 CHIEF Shepherd of thy chosen sheep,
From death and sin set free;
May ev'ry under-shepherd keep
His eye intent on thee!

2 With plenteous grace their hearts prepare
To execute thy will;
Compassion, patience, love, and care,
And faithfulness and skill.

3 Inflame their minds with holy zeal
Their flocks to feed and teach;
And let them live, and let them feel
The sacred truths they preach.

4 Oh! never let the sheep complain
That toys, which fools amuse,
Ambition, pleasure, praise, or gain,
Debase the shepherd's views.

5 He that for these forbears to feed
The souls whom Jesus loves,
Whate'er he may profess or plead,
An idol-shepherd proves. *

6 The sword of God shall break his arm,
A blast shall blind his eye;
His word shall have no pow'r to warm,
His gifts shall all grow dry.

7 O Lord, avert this heavy woe,
Let all thy shepherds say!
And grace and strength on each bestow
To labour while 'tis day.

LI. *Prayer for a Revival.*

1 Saviour, visit thy plantation,
Grant us, Lord, a gracious rain!
All will come to desolation,
Unless thou return again:
Keep no longer at a distance,
Shine upon us from on high;
Lest, for want of thine assistance,
Ev'ry plant should droop and die.

2 Surely, once thy garden flourish'd,
Ev'ry part look'd gay and green;
Then thy word our spirits nourish'd,
Happy seasons we have seen!

* Zechariah, xi. 17.

But a drought has since succeeded,
And a sad decline we see;
Lord, thy help is greatly needed;
Help can only come from thee.

3 Where are those we counted leaders,
Fill'd with zeal, and love, and truth?
Old professors, tall as cedars,
Bright examples to our youth!
Some, in whom we once delighted,
We shall meet no more below;
Some, alas! we fear are blighted,
Scarce a single leaf they show.

4 Younger plants—the sight how pleasant,
Cover'd thick with blossoms stood;
But they cause us grief at present,
Frosts have nipp'd them in the bud!
Dearest Saviour, hasten hither,
Thou canst make them bloom again;
Oh, permit them not to wither,
Let not all our hopes be vain!

5 Let our mutual love be fervent,
Make us prevalent in pray'rs;
Let each one esteem'd thy servant
Shun the world's bewitching snares;
Break the tempter's fatal power,
Turn the stony heart to flesh;
And begin, from this good hour,
To revive thy work afresh.

LII. *Hoping for a Revival.*

1 My harp untun'd, and laid aside
(To cheerful hours the harp belongs),
My cruel foes insulting cry'd,
"Come, sing us one of Zion's songs."

2 Alas! when sinners, blindly bold,
At Zion scoff, and Zion's King;
When zeal declines and love grows cold,
Is this a day for me to sing?

3 Time was, whene'er the saints I met,
With joy and praise my bosom glow'd;
But now, like Eli, sad I sit,
And tremble for the ark of God.

4 While thus to grief my soul gave way,
To see the work of God decline;
Methought I heard my Saviour say,
"Dismiss thy fears, the ark is mine.

5 "Though for a time I hide my face,
"Rely upon my love and pow'r;
"Still wrestle at a throne of grace,
"And wait for a reviving hour.

6 "Take down thy long neglected harp,
"I've seen thy tears and heard thy pray'r;
"The winter season has been sharp,
"But spring shall all its wastes repair."

7 Lord, I obey; my hopes revive;
Come join with me, ye saints, and sing;
Our foes in vain against us strive,
For God will help and healing bring.

SACRAMENTAL HYMNS.

LIII. C. *Welcome to the Table.*

1 This is the feast of heav'nly wine,
And God invites to sup;
The juices of the living vine
Were press'd, to fill the cup.

2 Oh! bless the Saviour, ye that eat,
With royal dainties fed;
Not heav'n affords a costlier treat,
For Jesus is the bread.

3 The vile, the lost, he calls to them,
Ye trembling souls, appear!
The righteous in their own esteem
Have no acceptance here.

4 Approach, ye poor, nor dare refuse
The banquet spread for you;
Dear Saviour, this is welcome news,
Then I may venture too.

5 If guilt and sin afford a plea,
And may obtain a place,
Surely the Lord will welcome me,
And I shall see his face.

LIV. *Christ crucified.*

1 When on the cross my Lord I see,
Bleeding to death for wretched me,
Satan and sin no more can move,
For I am all transform'd to love.

2 His thorns and nails pierce through my heart;
In ev'ry groan I bear a part;
I view his wounds with streaming eyes;
But see! he bows his head, and dies!

3 Come, sinners, view the Lamb of God,
Wounded and dead, and bath'd in blood!
Behold his side, and venture near,
The well of endless life is here.

4 Here I forget my cares and pains;
I drink, yet still my thirst remains;
Only the fountain head above
Can satisfy the thirst of love.

5 Oh, that I thus could always feel!
Lord, more and more thy love reveal!
Then my glad tongue shall loud proclaim
The grace and glory of thy name.

6 Thy name dispels my guilt and fear,
Revives my heart, and charms my ear;
Affords a balm for ev'ry wound,
And Satan trembles at the sound.

LV. C. *Jesus hasting to suffer.*

1 The Saviour, what a noble flame
Was kindled in his breast,
When, hasting to Jerusalem,
He march'd before the rest!

2 Good-will to men, and zeal for God,
His every thought engross;
He longs to be baptized with blood,*
He pants to reach the cross.

3 With all his suff'rings full in view,
And woes to us unknown,
Forth to the task his spirit flew,
'Twas love that urg'd him on.

4 Lord, we return thee what we can!
Our hearts shall sound abroad,
Salvation, to the dying Man,
And to the rising God!

* Luke, xii. 50.

5 And while thy bleeding glories here
Engage our wond'ring eyes,
We learn our lighter cross to bear,
And hasten to the skies.

LVI. *It is good to be here.*

1 Let me dwell on Golgotha,
Weep and love my life away!
While I see him on the tree,
Weep, and bleed, and die for me!

2 That dear blood, for sinners spilt,
Shows my sin in all its guilt:
Ah, my soul! he bore thy load:
Thou hast slain the Lamb of God.

3 Hark! his dying word, "Forgive;
"Father, let the sinner live;
"Sinner, wipe thy tears away,
"I thy ransom freely pay."

4 While I hear this grace reveal'd,
And obtain a pardon seal'd,
All my soft affections move,
Waken'd by the force of love.

5 Farewell, world; thy gold is dross;
Now I see the bleeding cross;
Jesus dy'd to set me free
From the law, and sin, and thee!

6 He has dearly bought my soul;
Lord, accept, and claim the whole;
To thy will I all resign,
Now no more my own, but thine.

LVII. *Looking at the Cross.*

1 In evil long I took delight,
Unaw'd by shame or fear,
Till a new object struck my sight,
And stopp'd my wild career.

2 I saw one hanging on a tree,
In agonies and blood,
Who fix'd his languid eyes on me,
As near his cross I stood.

3 Sure, never till my latest breath
Can I forget that look;
It seem'd to charge me with his death,
Though not a word he spoke.

4 My conscience felt, and own'd the guilt,
And plung'd me in despair;
I saw my sins his blood had spilt,
And help'd to nail him there.

5 Alas! I knew not what I did;
But now my tears are vain;
Where shall my trembling soul be hid?
For I the Lord have slain.

6 A second look he gave, which said,
"I freely all forgive;
"This blood is for thy ransom paid,
"I die, that thou mayst live."

7 Thus, while his death my sin displays
In all its blackest hue,
(Such is the mystery of grace,)
It seals my pardon too.

8 With pleasing grief and mournful joy
My spirit now is fill'd,
That I should such a life destroy,
Yet live by him I kill'd.

LVIII. *Supplies in the Wilderness.*

1 When Israel, by divine command,
The pathless desert trod,
They found, though 'twas a barren land,
A sure resource in God.

2 A cloudy pillar mark'd their road,
And screen'd them from the heat;
From the hard rocks the water flow'd,
And manna was their meat.

3 Like them, we have a rest in view,
Secure from adverse pow'rs;
Like them, we pass a desert too,
But Israel's God is ours.

4 Yes, in this barren wilderness
He is to us the same,
By his appointed means of grace,
As once he was to them.

5 His word a light before us spreads,
By which our path we see;
His love a banner o'er our heads,
From harm preserves us free.

6 Jesus, the bread of life, is giv'n
To be our daily food;
We drink a wondrous stream from heav'n,
'Tis water, wine, and blood.

7 Lord, 'tis enough, I ask no more,
These blessings are divine;
I envy not the worldling's store,
If Christ and heav'n are mine.

LIX. *Communion with the Saints in Glory.*

1 Refreshed by the bread and wine,
The pledges of our Saviour's love;
Now let our hearts and voices join
In songs of praise with those above.

2 Do they sing, "Worthy is the Lamb?"
Although we cannot reach their strains,
Yet we, through grace, can sing the same,
For us he dy'd, for us he reigns.

3 If they behold him face to face,
While we a glimpse can only see;
Yet equal debtors to his grace,
As safe and as belov'd are we.

4 They had, like us, a suff'ring time,
Our cares, and fears, and griefs they knew;
But they have conquer'd all through him,
And we ere long shall conquer too.

5 Though all the songs of saints in light
Are far beneath his matchless worth,
His grace is such, he will not slight
The poor attempts of worms on earth.

ON PRAYER.

LX. C. *Exhortation to Prayer.*

1 What various hind'rances we meet
In coming to a mercy seat!
Yet who that knows the worth of pray'r,
But wishes to be often there.

2 Pray'r makes the dark'ned cloud withdraw,
Pray'r climbs the ladder Jacob saw,
Gives exercise to faith and love,
Brings ev'ry blessing from above.

3 Restraining pray'r, we cease to fight;
Pray'r makes the Christian's armour bright;
And Satan trembles when he sees
The weakest saint upon his knees.

4 While Moses stood with arms spread wide,
Success was found on Israel's side;
But when through weariness they fail'd,
That moment Amalek prevail'd.*

5 Have you no words? ah! think again,
Words flow apace when you complain,
And fill your fellow-creature's ear
With the sad tale of all your care.

6 Were half the breath thus vainly spent,
To heav'n in supplication sent,
Your cheerful song would oft'ner be,
"Hear what the Lord has done for me."

* Exodus, xvii. 11.

LXI. *Power of Prayer.*

1 In themselves, as weak as worms,
How can poor believers stand,
When temptations, foes, and storms,
Press them close on ev'ry hand?

2 Weak, indeed, they feel they are,
But they know the throne of grace;
And the God who answers pray'r
Helps them when they seek his face.

3 Though the Lord a while delay,
Succour they at length obtain;
He who taught their hearts to pray,
Will not let them cry in vain.

4 Wrestling pray'r can wonders do,
Bring relief in deepest straits;
Pray'r can force a passage through
Iron bars and brazen gates.

5 Hezekiah on his knees
Proud Assyria's host subdu'd;
And when smitten with disease,
Had his life by pray'r renew'd.

6 Peter, though confin'd and chain'd,
Pray'r prevail'd and brought him out;
When Elijah pray'd, it rain'd,
After three long years of drought.

7 We can likewise witness bear,
That the Lord is still the same;
Though we fear'd he would not hear,
Suddenly deliv'rance came.

8 For the wonders he has wrought,
Let us now our praises give;
And by sweet experience taught,
Call upon him while we live.

ON THE SCRIPTURE.

LXII. C. *The Light and Glory of the Word.*

1 The Spirit breathes upon the word,
And brings the truth to sight;
Precepts and promises afford
A sanctifying light.

2 A glory gilds the sacred page,
Majestic like the sun;
It gives a light to ev'ry age,
It gives, but borrows none.

3 The hand that gave it still supplies
The gracious light and heat;
His truths upon the nations rise,
They rise but never set.

4 Let everlasting thanks be thine,
For such a bright display,
As makes a world of darkness shine
With beams of heav'nly day.

5 My soul rejoices to pursue
The steps of him I love;
Till glory breaks upon my view
In brighter worlds above.

LXIII. *The Word more precious than Gold.*

1 Precious Bible! what a treasure
Does the word of God afford!
All I want for life or pleasure,
Food and Med'cine, Shield and Sword:
Let the world account me poor,
Having this I need no more.

2 Food to which the world's a stranger,
Here my hungry soul enjoys;
Of excess there is no danger,
Though it fills, it never cloys:
On a dying Christ I feed,
He is meat and drink indeed!

3 When my faith is faint and sickly,
Or when Satan wounds my mind,
Cordials to revive me quickly,
Healing Med'cines here I find:
To the promises I flee,
Each affords a remedy.

4 In the hour of dark temptation
Satan cannot make me yield;
For the word of consolation
Is to me a mighty Shield:
While the Scripture-truths are sure,
From his malice I'm secure.

5 Vain his threats to overcome me,
When I take the Spirit's sword;
Then with ease I drive him from me,
Satan trembles at the word:
'Tis a Sword for conquest made,
Keen the edge, and strong the blade.

6 Shall I envy then the miser,
Doating on his golden store?
Sure I am, or should be wiser,
I am rich, 'tis he is poor:
Jesus gives me in his word,
FOOD and MED'CINE, SHIELD and SWORD.

III. PROVIDENCES.

LXIV. *On the Commencement of Hostilities in America.*

1 THE gath'ring clouds, with aspect dark,
A rising storm presage;
Oh! to be hid within the ark,
And shelter'd from its rage!

2 See the commission'd angel frown! *
That vial in his hand,
Fill'd with fierce wrath, is pouring down
Upon our guilty land!

3 Ye saints, unite in wrestling pray'r,
If yet there may be hope;
Who knows but mercy yet may spare,
And bid the angel stop? †

4 Already is the plague begun, ‡
And fir'd with hostile rage,
Brethren, by blood and int'rest one,
With brethren now engage.

5 Peace spreads her wings, prepar'd for flight,
And war, with flaming sword,
And hasty strides, draws nigh, to fight
The battles of the Lord.

* Rev. xvi. 1. † 2 Sam. xxiv. 16. ‡ Num. xvi. 46.

6 The first alarm, alas! how few,
While distant, seem to hear!
But they will hear, and tremble too,
When God shall send it near.

7 So thunder o'er the distant hills
Gives but a murm'ring sound;
But as the tempest spreads, it fills
And shakes the welkin * round.

8 May we, at least, with one consent,
Fall low before the throne;
With tears the nation's sins lament,
The church's, and our own.

9 The humble souls who mourn and pray,
The Lord approves and knows;
His mark secures them in the day
When vengeance strikes his foes.

FAST-DAY HYMNS.

LXV. *Confession and Prayer.* Dec. 13, 1776.

1 Oh! may the pow'r which melts the rock
Be felt by all assembled here!
Or else our service will but mock
The God whom we profess to fear.

2 Lord, while thy judgements shake the land,
Thy people's eyes are fix'd on thee!
We own thy just uplifted hand,
Which thousands cannot, will not see.

3 How long hast thou bestow'd thy care
On this indulg'd, ungrateful spot;
While other nations, far and near,
Have envied and admir'd our lot.

* Firmament, or Atmosphere.

4 Here peace and liberty have dwelt,
The glorious Gospel brightly shone;
And oft our enemies have felt
That God has made our cause his own.

5 But, ah! both heav'n and earth have heard
Our vile requital of his love!
We, whom like children he has rear'd,
Rebels against his goodness prove. *

6 His grace despis'd, his pow'r defy'd,
And legions of the blackest crimes,
Profaneness, riot, lust, and pride,
Are signs that mark the present times.

7 The Lord, displeas'd, has rais'd his rod;
Ah! where are now the faithful few
Who tremble for the ark of God,
And know what Israel ought to do? †

8 Lord, hear thy people ev'ry where,
Who meet to mourn, confess, and pray;
The nation and thy churches spare,
And let thy wrath be turn'd away.

LXVI. *Moses and Amalek.* ‡ February 27, 1778.

1 While Joshua led the armed bands
Of Israel forth to war;
Moses apart, with lifted hands,
Engag'd in humble pray'r.

2 The armed bands had quickly fail'd,
And perish'd in the fight,
If Moses' pray'r had not prevail'd
To put the foes to flight.

* Isa. i. 2. † 1 Chron. xii. 32. ‡ Exod. xvii. 9.

3 When Moses' hands through weakness dropp'd,
The warriors fainted too;
Israel's success at once was stopp'd,
And Am'lek bolder grew.

4 A people, always prone to boast,
Were taught by this suspense,
That not a num'rous armed host,
But God was their defence.

5 We now of fleets and armies vaunt,
And ships and men prepare;
But men like Moses most we want,
To save the state by pray'r.

6 Yet, Lord, we hope thou hast prepar'd
A hidden few to-day
(The nation's secret strength and guard,)
To weep, and mourn, and pray.

7 O hear their pray'rs, and grant us aid,
Bid war and discord cease;
Heal the sad breach which sin has made,
And bless us all with peace.

LXVII. *The Hiding Place.* Feb. 10, 1779.

1 See the gloomy gath'ring cloud,
Hanging o'er a sinful land!
Sure the Lord proclaims aloud,
Times of trouble are at hand:
Happy they who love his name!
They shall always find him near;
Though the earth were wrapp'd in flame,
They have no just cause for fear.

2 Hark, his voice in accents mild
(Oh, how comforting and sweet!)
Speaks to every humble child,
Pointing out a sure retreat!
"Come, and in my chambers hide,*
"To my saints of old well known;
"There you safely may abide,
"Till the storm be overblown.

3 "You have only to repose
"On my wisdom, love, and care;
"When my wrath consumes my foes,
"Mercy shall my children spare;
"While they perish in the flood,
"You that bear my holy mark,†
"Sprinkled with atoning blood,
"Shall be safe within the ark."

4 Sinners, see the ark prepar'd!
Haste to enter while there's room;
Though the Lord his arm has bar'd,
Mercy still retards your doom:
Seek him while there yet is hope,
Ere the day of grace be past,
Lest in wrath he give you up,
And this call should prove your last.

LXVIII. *On the Earthquake,* Sept. 8, 1775.

1 Although on massy pillars built,
The earth has lately shook;
It trembles under Britain's guilt,
Before its Maker's look.

* Isa. xxvi. 20. † Ezek. ix. 4.

2 Swift as the shock amazement spreads,
And sinners tremble too;
What flight can screen their guilty heads,
If earth itself pursue?

3 But mercy spar'd us while it warn'd,
The shock is felt no more;
And mercy now, alas! is scorn'd
By sinners, as before.

4 But if these warnings prove in vain,
Say, sinner, canst thou tell,
How soon the earth may quake again,
And open wide to hell.

5 Repent before the Judge draws nigh;
Or else when he comes down,
Thou wilt in vain for earthquakes cry,
To hide thee from his frown. *

6 But happy they who love the Lord,
And his salvation know;
The hope that's founded on his word,
No change can overthrow.

7 Should the deep-rooted hills be hurl'd,
And plung'd beneath the seas,
And strong convulsions shake the world,
Your hearts may rest in peace.

8 Jesus, your Shepherd, Lord, and Chief,
Shall shelter you from ill;
And not a worm or shaking leaf
Can move, but at his will.

* Rev. vi. 16.

LXIX. *On the Fire at Olney.* Sept. 22, 1777.

1 WEARIED by day with toil and cares,
How welcome is the peaceful night!
Sweet sleep our wasted strength repairs,
And fits us for returning light.

2 Yet when our eyes in sleep are clos'd,
Our rest may break ere well begun;
To dangers ev'ry hour expos'd
We neither can foresee nor shun.

3 'Tis of the Lord that we can sleep
A single night without alarms;
His eye alone our lives can keep
Secure amidst a thousand harms.

4 For months and years of safety past
Ungrateful we, alas! have been;
Though patient long, he spoke at last,
And bid the fire rebuke our sin.

5 The shout of fire! a dreadful cry,
Impress'd each heart with deep dismay;
While the fierce blaze and redd'ning sky
Made midnight wear the face of day.

6 The throng and terror who can speak?
The various sounds that fill'd the air!
The infant's wail, the mother's shriek,
The voice of blasphemy and pray'r!

7 But pray'r prevail'd and sav'd the town;
The few who lov'd the Saviour's name
Were heard, and mercy hasted down,
To change the wind, and stop the flame.

FUNERAL HYMNS.

LXXII. *On the Death of a Believer.*

1 In vain my fancy strives to paint
The moment after death,
The glories that surround the saints,
When yielding up their breath.

2 One gentle sigh their fetters breaks;
We scarce can say, "They're gone!"
Before the willing spirit takes
Her mansion near the throne.

3 Faith strives, but all its efforts fail,
To trace her in her flight:
No eye can pierce within the vail
Which hides that world of light.

4 Thus much (and this is all) we know,
They are completely blest;
Have done with sin, and care, and woe,
And with their Saviour rest.

5 On harps of gold they praise his name,
His face they always view;
Then let us follow'rs be of them,
That we may praise him too.

6 Their faith and patience, love and zeal,
Should make their mem'ry dear;
And, Lord, do thou the pray'rs fulfil
They offer'd for us here!

7 While they have gain'd, we losers are,
We miss them day by day;
But thou canst ev'ry breach repair,
And wipe our tears away.

8 We pray, as in Elisha's case,
When great Elijah went,
May double portions of thy grace,
To us who stay, be sent.

LXXIII. C. *On the Death of a Minister.*

1 His master taken from his head,
Elisha saw him go;
And, in desponding accents said,
"Ah, what must Israel do!"

2 But he forgot the Lord who lifts
The beggar to the throne;
Nor knew that all Elijah's gifts
Will soon be made his own.

3 What! when a Paul has run his course;
Or when Apollos dies,
Is Israel left without resource,
And have we no supplies?

4 Yes, while the dear Redeemer lives,
We have a boundless store,
And shall be fed with what he gives,
Who lives for evermore.

LXXIV. *The tolling Bell.*

1 Oft as the bell, with solemn toll,
Speaks the departure of a soul,
Let each one ask himself, "Am I
"Prepar'd, should I be call'd to die?"

2 Only this frail and fleeting breath
Preserves me from the jaws of death;
Soon as it fails, at once I'm gone,
And plung'd into a world unknown.

3 Then leaving all I lov'd below,
To God's tribunal I must go;
Must hear the Judge pronounce my fate,
And fix my everlasting state.

4 But could I bear to hear him say,
"Depart, accursed, far away!
"With Satan, in the lowest hell,
"Thou art for ever doom'd to dwell."

5 Lord Jesus, help me now to flee
And seek my hope alone in thee;
Apply thy blood, thy Spirit give,
Subdue my sin, and let me live.

6 Then, when the solemn bell I hear,
If sav'd from guilt, I need not fear;
Nor would the thought distressing be,
Perhaps it next may toll for me.

7 Rather, my spirit would rejoice,
And long, and wish, to hear thy voice;
Glad when it bids me earth resign,
Secure of heav'n, if thou art mine.

LXXV. *Hope beyond the Grave.*

1 My soul, this curious house of clay,
Thy present frail abode,
Must quickly fall to worms a prey,
And thou return to God.

2 Canst thou, by faith, survey with joy
The change before it come;
And say, "Let death this house destroy,
"I have a heav'nly home?"

3 The Saviour, whom I then shall see
With new admiring eyes,
Already has prepar'd for me
A mansion in the skies.*

4 I feel this mud-wall'd cottage shake,
And long to see it fall;
That I my willing flight may take
To him who is my all.

5 Burden'd and groaning then no more,
My rescu'd soul shall sing,
As up the shining path I soar,
"Death thou hast lost thy sting."

6 Dear Saviour, help us now to seek,
And know thy grace's pow'r;
That we may all this language speak,
Before the dying hour.

LXXVI. *There the Weary are at Rest.*

1 COURAGE, my soul! behold the prize
The Saviour's love provides;
Eternal life beyond the skies
For all whom here he guides.

2 The wicked cease from troubling there,
The weary are at rest;†
Sorrow, and sin, and pain, and care,
No more approach the blest.

3 A wicked world, and wicked heart,
With Satan now are join'd;
Each acts a too successful part
In harassing my mind.

* 2 Cor. v. 1. † Job, iii. 17.

4 In conflict with this threefold troop,
How weary, Lord, am I!
Did not thy promise bear me up,
My soul must faint and die.

5 But fighting in my Saviour's strength,
Though mighty are my foes,
I shall a conqu'ror be at length
O'er all that can oppose.

6 Then why, my soul, complain or fear?
The crown of glory see!
The more I toil and suffer here,
The sweeter rest will be.

LXXVII. *The Day of Judgement.*

1 Day of judgement, day of wonders!
Hark! the trumpet's awful sound,
Louder than a thousand thunders,
Shakes the vast creation round!
How the summons will the sinner's heart confound

2 See the Judge, our nature wearing,
Cloth'd in majesty divine!
You who long for his appearing,
Then shall say, "This God is mine!"
Gracious Saviour, own me in that day for thine!

3 At his call, the dead awaken,
Rise to life from earth and sea:
All the pow'rs of nature shaken
By his looks prepare to flee:
Careless sinner, what will then become of thee?

4 Horrors past imagination
Will surprise your trembling heart,
When you hear your condemnation,
"Hence, accursed wretch, depart!
"Thou with Satan and his angels have thy part!"

5 Satan, who now tries to please you,
Lest you timely warning take,
When that word is past, will seize you,
Plunge you in the burning lake:
Think, poor sinner, thy eternal all's at stake.

6 But to those who have confessed,
Lov'd and serv'd the Lord below,
He will say, "Come near, ye blessed,
"See the kingdom I bestow;
"You for ever shall my love and glory know."

7 Under sorrows and reproaches,
May this thought your courage raise;
Swiftly God's great day approaches,
Sighs shall then be chang'd to praise:
We shall triumph when the world is in a blaze.

LXXVIII. *The Day of the Lord.**

1 God with one piercing glance looks through
Creation's wide-extended frame;
The past and future in his view,
And days and ages are the same.†

2 Sinners who dare provoke his face,
Who on his patience long presume,
And trifle out his day of grace,
Will find he has a day of doom.

3 As pangs the lab'ring woman feels,
Or as the thief, in midnight sleep;
So comes that day, for which the wheels
Of time their ceaseless motion keep.

* Book III. Hymn 4. † 2 Pet. iii. 8—10.

4 Hark! from the sky, the trump proclaims
Jesus the Judge approaching nigh!
See, the creation wrapt in flames,
First kindled by his vengeful eye!

5 When thus the mountains melt like wax;
When earth, and air, and sea shall burn:
When all the frame of nature breaks,
Poor sinner, whither wilt thou turn?

6 The puny works which feeble men
Now boast, or covet, or admire;
Their pomp, and arts, and treasures, then
Shall perish in one common fire.

7 Lord, fix our hearts and hopes above!
Since all below to ruin tends;
Here may we trust, obey, and love,
And there be found amongst thy friends.

LXXIX. *The great Tribunal.**

1 JOHN, in a vision, saw the day
When the Judge will hasten down:
Heav'n and earth shall flee away
From the terror of his frown:
Dead and living, small and great,
Raised from the earth and sea,
At his bar shall hear their fate,
What will then become of me?

2 Can I bear his awful looks?
Shall I stand in judgement then,
When I see the open'd books,
Written by th' Almighty's pen?

* Rev. xx. 11, 12.

If he to remembrance bring,
And expose to public view,
Ev'ry work and secret thing,
Ah, my soul, what canst thou do?

3 When the list shall be produc'd
Of the talents I enjoy'd;
Means and mercies, how abus'd!
Time and strength, how misemploy'd!
Conscience then, compell'd to read,
Must allow the charge is true;
Say, my soul, what canst thou plead
In that hour, what wilt thou do?

4 But the book of life I see,
May my name be written there!
Then from guilt and danger free,
Glad I'll meet him in the air:
That's the book I hope to plead,
'Tis the Gospel open'd wide;
Lord, I am a wretch indeed!
I have sinn'd, but thou hast dy'd.*

5 Now my soul knows what to do;
Thus I shall with boldness stand,
Number'd with the faithful few,
Own'd and sav'd, at thy right hand:
If thou help a feeble worm
To believe thy promise now,
Justice will at last confirm
What thy mercy wrought below.

* Rom. viii. 34.

IV. CREATION.

LXXX. *The Old and New Creation.*

1 That was a wonder-working word
Which could the vast creation raise!
Angels, attendant on their Lord,
Admir'd the plan, and sung his praise.*

2 From what a dark and shapeless mass,
All nature sprang at his command!
Let there be light, and light there was,
And sun, and stars, and sea, and land.

3 With equal speed the earth and seas
Their mighty Maker's voice obey'd;
He spake, and straight the plants and trees,
And birds, and beasts, and man were made.

4 But man, the lord and crown of all,
By sin his honour soon defac'd;
His heart (how alter'd since the fall!)
Is dark, deform'd, and void, and waste.

5 The new creation of the soul
Does now no less his pow'r display,
Than when he form'd the mighty whole,
And kindled darkness into day.†

6 Though self-destroy'd, O Lord, we are,
Yet let us feel what thou canst do;
Thy word the ruin can repair,
And all our hearts create anew.

* Job, xxxviii. 7. † 2 Cor. iv. 6.

LXXXI. *The Book of Creation.*

1 The book of nature open lies,
With much instruction stor'd;
But till the Lord anoints our eyes,
We cannot read a word.

2 Philosophers have por'd in vain,
And guess'd from age to age;
For reason's eye could ne'er attain
To understand a page.

3 Though to each star they give a name,
Its size and motions teach;
The truths which all the stars proclaim
Their wisdom cannot reach.

4 With skill to measure earth and sea,
And weigh the subtle air;
They cannot, Lord, discover thee,
Though present ev'ry where.

5 The knowledge of the saints excels
The wisdom of the schools;
To them his secrets God reveals,
Though men account them fools.

6 To them the sun and stars on high,
The flow'rs that paint the field,
And all the artless birds that fly,
Divine instruction yield.*

7 The creatures on their senses press,
As witnesses to prove
Their Saviour's pow'r and faithfulness,
His providence and love.

* Matt. vi. 26—28.

8 Thus may we study nature's book,
To make us wise indeed!
And pity those who only look
At what they cannot read.*

LXXXII. *The Rainbow.*

1 When the sun, with cheerful beams,
Smiles upon a low'ring sky,
Soon its aspect soft'ned seems,
And a rainbow meets the eye:
While the sky remains serene,
This bright arch is never seen.

2 Thus the Lord's supporting pow'r
Brightest to his saints appears,
When affliction's threat'ning hour
Fills their sky with clouds and fears:
He can wonders then perform,
Paint a rainbow on the storm.†

3 All their graces doubly shine,
When their troubles press them sore;
And the promises divine
Give them joys unknown before:
As the colours of the bow
To the cloud their brightness owe.

4 Favour'd John a rainbow saw,
Circling round the throne above;‡
Hence the saints a pledge may draw
Of unchanging cov'nant love;
Clouds a while may intervene,
But the bow will still be seen.

* Rom. i. 20. † Gen. ix. 14. ‡ Rev. iv. 3.

LXXXIII. *Thunder.*

1 When a black o'erspreading cloud
Has dark'ned all the air,
And peals of thunder, roaring loud,
Proclaim the tempest near;

2 Then guilt and fear, the fruits of sin,
The sinner oft pursue;
A louder storm is heard within,
And conscience thunders too.

3 The law a fiery language speaks,
His danger he perceives;
Like Satan, who his ruin seeks,
He trembles and believes.

4 But when the sky serene appears,
And thunders roll no more,
He soon forgets his vows and fears,
Just as he did before.

5 But whither shall the sinner flee,
When nature's mighty frame,
The pond'rous earth, and air, and sea,
Shall all dissolve in flame?*

6 Amazing day! it comes apace!
The Judge is hasting down!
Will sinners bear to see his face,
Or stand before his frown?

7 Lord, let thy mercy find a way
To touch each stubborn heart;
That they may never hear thee say,
"Ye cursed ones, depart."

* 2 Pet. iii. 10.

8 Believers, ye may well rejoice!
The thunder's loudest strains
Should be to you a welcome voice,
That tells you, "JESUS REIGNS!"

LXXXIV. *Lightning in the Night.*

1 A GLANCE from heav'n, with sweet effect,
Sometimes my pensive spirit cheers;
But ere I can my thoughts collect,
As suddenly it disappears.

2 So lightning in the gloom of night
Affords a momentary day;
Disclosing objects full in sight,
Which soon as seen are snatch'd away.

3 Ah! what avail these pleasing scenes!
They do but aggravate my pain;
While darkness quickly intervenes,
And swallows up my joys again.

4 But shall I murmur at relief?
Though short, it was a precious view,
Sent to control my unbelief,
And prove that what I read was true.

5 The lightning's flash did not create
The opening prospect it reveal'd;
But only show'd the real state
Of what the darkness had conceal'd.

6 Just so, we by a glimpse discern
The glorious things within the vail;
That, when in darkness, we may learn
To live by faith, till light prevail.

7 The Lord's great day will soon advance,
Dispersing all the shades of night;
Then we no more shall need a glance,
But see by an eternal light.

LXXXV. *On the Eclipse of the Moon,* July 30, 1776.

1 The moon in silver glory shone,
And not a cloud in sight,
When suddenly a shade begun
To intercept her light.

2 How fast across her orb it spread,
How fast her light withdrew!
A circle ting'd with languid red,
Was all appear'd in view.

3 While many, with unmeaning eye,
Gaze on thy works in vain,
Assist me, Lord, that I may try
Instruction to obtain.

4 Fain would my thankful heart and lips
Unite in praise of thee,
And meditate on thy eclipse,
In sad Gethsemane.

5 Thy people's guilt, a heavy load
(When standing in their room),
Depriv'd thee of the light of God,
And fill'd thy soul with gloom.

6 How punctually eclipses move,
Obedient to thy will!
Thus shall thy faithfulness and love
Thy promises fulfil.

7 Dark, like the moon without the sun,
I mourn thine absence, Lord!
For light or comfort I have none
But what thy beams afford.

8 But, lo! the hour draws near apace,
When changes shall be o'er;
Then I shall see thee face to face,*
And be eclips'd no more.

LXXXVI. *Moon-light.*

1 The moon has but a borrow'd light,
A faint and feeble ray;
She owes her beauty to the night,
And hides herself by day.

2 No cheering warmth her beam conveys,
Though pleasing to behold;
We might upon her brightness gaze
Till we were starv'd with cold.

3 Just such is all the light to man
Which reason can impart;
It cannot show one object plain,
Nor warm the frozen heart.

4 Thus moon-light views of truth divine
To many fatal prove;
For what avail in gifts to shine
Without a spark of love!†

5 The Gospel, like the sun at noon,
Affords a glorious light;
Then fallen reason's boasted moon
Appears no longer bright.

* 1 Cor. xiii. 12. † 1 Cor. xiii. 1.

6 And grace not light alone bestows,
But adds a quick'ning pow'r;
The desert blossoms like the rose,*
And sin prevails no more.

LXXXVII. *The Sea.* †

1 If for a time the air be calm,
Serene and smooth the sea appears,
And shows no danger to alarm
The unexperienc'd landsman's fears:

2 But if the tempest once arise,
The faithless water swells and raves:
Its billows, foaming to the skies,
Disclose a thousand threat'ning graves.

3 My untry'd heart thus seem'd to me
(So little of myself I knew)
Smooth as the calm unruffled sea,
But, ah! it prov'd as treach'rous too!

4 The peace of which I had a taste
When Jesus first his love reveal'd,
I fondly hop'd would always last,
Because my foes were then conceal'd.

5 But when I felt the tempter's pow'r
Rouse my corruptions from their sleep,
I trembled at the stormy hour,
And saw the horrors of the deep.

6 Now on presumption's billows borne,
My spirit seem'd the Lord to dare;
Now, quick as thought, a sudden turn
Plung'd me in gulfs of black despair.

* Isaiah, xxxv. 1. † Book I. Hymn 115.

7 Lord, save me, or I sink, I pray'd;
He heard, and bid the tempest cease;
The angry waves his word obey'd,
And all my fears were hush'd to peace.

8 The peace is his, and not my own,
My heart (no better than before)
Is still to dreadful changes prone,
Then let me never trust it more.

LXXXVIII. *The Flood.*

1 Though small the drops of falling rain,
If one be singly view'd;
Collected, they o'erspread the plain,
And form a mighty flood.

2 The house it meets with in its course
Should not be built on clay,
Lest, with a wild, resistless force,
It sweep the whole away.

3 Though for a while it seem'd secure,
It will not bear the shock,
Unless it has foundations sure,
And stands upon a rock.

4 Thus sinners think their evil deeds,
Like drops of rain, are small;
But it the pow'r of thought exceeds,
To count the sum of all.

5 One sin can raise, though small it seems,
A flood to drown the soul;
What then, when countless million streams
Shall join to swell the whole.

6 Yet, while they think the weather's fair,
If warn'd, they smile or frown;
But they will tremble and despair,
When the fierce flood comes down.

7 Oh! then on Jesus ground your hope,
That stone in Zion laid; *
Lest your poor building quickly drop,
With ruin on your head.

LXXXIX. *The Thaw.*

1 The ice and snow we lately saw,
Which cover'd all the ground,
Are melted soon before the thaw,
And can no more be found.

2 Could all the art of man suffice
To move away the snow,
To clear the rivers from the ice,
Or make the waters flow?

3 No, 'tis the work of God alone;
An emblem of the pow'r
By which he melts the heart of stone
In his appointed hour.

4 All outward means, till he appears,
Will ineffectual prove;
Though much the sinner sees and hears,
He cannot learn to love.

5 But let the stoutest sinner feel
The soft'ning warmth of grace,
Though hard as ice, or rocks, or steel,
His heart dissolves apace.

* Matt. vii. 24.; 1 Pet. ii. 6.

6 Seeing the blood which Jesus spilt,
To save his soul from woe,
His hatred, unbelief, and guilt,
All melt away like snow.

7 Jesus, we in thy name entreat,
Reveal thy gracious arm;
And grant thy Spirit's kindly heat,
Our frozen hearts to warm.

XC. *The Loadstone.*

1 As needles point towards the pole,
When touch'd by the magnetic stone;
So faith in Jesus gives the soul
A tendency before unknown.

2 Till then, by blinded passions led,
In search of fancy'd good we range;
The paths of disappointment tread,
To nothing fix'd, but love of change.

3 But when the Holy Ghost imparts
A knowledge of the Saviour's love,
Our wand'ring, weary, restless hearts,
Are fix'd at once, no more to move.

4 Now a new principle takes place,
Which guides and animates the will;
This love, another name for grace,
Constrains to good, and bars from ill.

5 By love's pure light we soon perceive
Our noblest bliss and proper end;
And gladly ev'ry idol leave,
To love and serve our Lord and Friend.

6 Thus borne along by faith and hope,
We feel the Saviour's words are true;
"And I, if I be lifted up,
"Will draw the sinner upward too." *

XCI. *The Spider and Bee.*

1 On the same flow'r we often see
The loathsome spider and the bee;
But what they get by working there
Is diff'rent, as their natures are.

2 The bee a sweet reward obtains,
And honey well repays his pains;
Home to the hive he bears the store,
And then returns in quest of more.

3 But no sweet flow'rs that grace the field
Can honey to the spider yield;
A cobweb all that he can spin,
And poison all he stores within.

4 Thus in that sacred field, the Word,
With flow'rs of God's own planting stor'd,
Like bees his children feed and thrive,
And bring home honey to the hive.

5 There, spider-like, the wicked come,
And seem to taste the sweet perfume;
But the vile venom of their hearts
To poison all their food converts.

6 From the same truths believers prize,
They weave vain refuges of lies;
And from the promise licence draw,
To trifle with the holy law.

* John, xii. 32.

6 O Saviour! how thy wondrous pow'r
By angels is proclaim'd,
When in thine own appointed hour,
They see this lion tam'd.

7 The love thy bleeding cross displays,
The hardest heart subdues;
Here furious lions while they gaze,
Their rage and fierceness lose.*

8 Yet we are but renew'd in part,
The lion still remains;
Lord, drive him wholly from my heart,
Or keep him fast in chains.

XCIV. *Sheep.*

1 The Saviour calls his people sheep,
And bids them on his love rely;
For he alone their souls can keep,
And he alone their wants supply.

2 The bull can fight, the hare can flee,
The ant, in summer, food prepare;
But helpless sheep, and such are we,
Depend upon the shepherd's care.

3 Jehovah is our Shepherd's name;†
Then what have we, though weak, to fear?
Our sin and folly we proclaim,
If we despond while he is near.

4 When Satan threatens to devour,
When troubles press on ev'ry side,
Think of our Shepherd's care and pow'r,
He can defend, he will provide.

* Isa. xi. 6. † Psal. xxiii. 1.

5 See the rich pastures of his grace,
Where, in full streams, salvation flows!
There he appoints our resting place,
And we may feed secure from foes.

6 There, 'midst the flock, the Shepherd dwells,
The sheep around in safety lie;
The wolf, in vain, with malice swells,
For he protects them with his eye.*

7 Dear Lord, if I am one of thine,
From anxious thoughts I would be free;
To trust, and love, and praise, is mine,
The care of all belongs to thee.

XCV. *The Garden.*

1 A GARDEN contemplation suits,
And may instruction yield,
Sweeter than all the flow'rs and fruits
With which the spot is fill'd.

2 Eden was Adam's dwelling-place,
While blest with innocence;
But sin o'erwhelm'd him with disgrace,
And drove the rebel thence.

3 Oft as the garden-walk we tread,
We should bemoan his fall;
The trespass of our legal head
In ruin plung'd us all.

4 The garden of Gethsemane
The second Adam saw,
Oppress'd with woe, to set us free
From the avenging law.

* Micah, v. 4.

5 How stupid we, who can forget,
With gardens in our sight,
His agonies and bloody sweat,
In that tremendous night!

6 His church as a fair garden stands,
Which walls of love enclose;
Each tree is planted by his hands,*
And by his blessing grows.

7 Believing hearts are gardens too,
For grace has sown its seeds,
Where once, by nature, nothing grew
But thorns and worthless weeds.

8 Such themes to those who Jesus love,
May constant joys afford,
And make a barren desert prove
The garden of the Lord.

XCVI. *For a Garden-seat or Summer-house.*

1 A SHELTER from the rain or wind.†
A shade from scorching heat,
A resting-place you here may find,
To ease your weary feet.

2 Enter, but with a serious thought
Consider who is near!
This is a consecrated spot,
The Lord is present here!

3 A question of the utmost weight,
While reading, meets your eye;
May conscience witness to your state,
And give a true reply!

* Isa. lxi. 3. † Isa. xxxii. 2.

4 Is Jesus to your heart reveal'd,
As full of truth and grace?
And is his name your hope and shield,
Your rest and hiding place?

5 If so, for all events prepar'd,
Whatever storms may rise,
He, whom you love, will safely guard,
And guide you to the skies.

6 No burning sun, or storm, or rain,
Will there your peace annoy;
No sin, temptation, grief, or pain,
Intrude to damp your joy.

7 But if his name you have not known,
Oh, seek him while you may!
Lest you should meet his awful frown,
In that approaching day.

8 When the avenging Judge you see,
With terrors on his brow,
Where can you hide, or whither flee,
If you reject him now?

XCVII. *The Creatures in the Lord's Hands.*

1 The water stood like walls of brass,
To let the sons of Israel pass;*
And from the rock in rivers burst,†
At Moses' prayer, to quench their thirst.

2 The fire, restrain'd by God's commands,
Could only burn his people's bands,
Too faint, when he was with them there,
To singe their garments or their hair.‡

* Exod. xiv. 22. † Numb. xx. 11. ‡ Daniel, iii. 27.

3 At Daniel's feet the lions lay
Like harmless lambs, nor touch'd their prey;*
And ravens, which on carrion fed,
Procur'd Elijah flesh and bread.

4 Thus creatures only can fulfil
Their great Creator's holy will;
And when his servants need their aid,
His purposes must be obey'd.

5 So if his blessing he refuse,
Their pow'r to help they quickly lose;
Sure as on creatures we depend,
Our hopes in disappointment end.

6 Then let us trust the Lord alone,
And creature-confidence disown;
Nor if they threaten need we fear,
They cannot hurt if he be near.

7 If instruments of pain they prove,
Still they are guided by his love;
As lancets by the surgeon's skill,
Which wound to cure, and not to kill.

XCVIII. *On Dreaming.*

1 When slumber seals our weary eyes,
The busy fancy wakeful keeps;
The scenes which then before us rise,
Prove something in us never sleeps.

2 As in another world we seem,
A new creation of our own,
All appears real, though a dream,
And all familiar, though unknown.

* Daniel, vi. 23.

3 Sometimes the mind beholds again
The past day's business in review,
Resumes the pleasure or the pain;
And sometimes all we meet is new.

4 What schemes we form, what pains we take!
We fight, we run, we fly, we fall;
But all is ended when we wake,
We scarcely then a trace recall.

5 But though our dreams are often wild,
Like clouds before the driving storm;
Yet some important may be styl'd,
Sent to admonish or inform.

6 What mighty agents have access,
What friends from heav'n, or foes from hell;
Our minds to comfort or distress,
When we are sleeping, who can tell?

7 One thing, at least, and 'tis enough,
We learn from this surprising fact;
Our dreams afford sufficient proof,
The soul, without the flesh, can act.

8 This life, which mortals so esteem,
That many choose it for their all,
They will confess, was but a dream,*
When 'waken'd by death's awful call.

XCIX. *The World.*

1 See, the world for youth prepares,
Harlot-like, her gaudy snares!
Pleasures round her seem to wait,
But 'tis all a painted cheat.

* Isaiah, xxix. 8.

2 Rash and unsuspecting youth
Thinks to find thee always smooth,
Always kind, till better taught,
By experience dearly bought.

3 So the calm, but faithless sea
(Lively emblem, world, of thee)
Tempts the shepherd from the shore,
Foreign regions to explore.

4 While no wrinkled wave is seen,
While the sky remains serene,
Fill'd with hopes, and golden schemes,
Of a storm he little dreams.

5 But ere long the tempest raves,
Then he trembles at the waves;
Wishes then he had been wise,
But too late—he sinks and dies.

6 Hapless thus, are they, vain world,
Soon on rocks of ruin hurl'd,
Who admiring thee, untry'd,
Court thy pleasure, wealth, or pride.

7 Such a shipwreck had been mine,
Had not Jesus (name divine!)
Sav'd me with a mighty hand,
And restor'd my soul to land.

8 Now, with gratitude I raise
Ebenezers to his praise;
Now my rash pursuits are o'er,
I can trust thee, world, no more,

C. *The Enchantment dissolved.*

1 Blinded in youth by Satan's arts,
The world to our unpractis'd hearts
A flatt'ring prospect shows;
Our fancy forms a thousand schemes
Of gay delights, and golden dreams,
And undisturb'd repose.

2 So in the desert's dreary waste,
By magic pow'r produc'd in haste
(As ancient fables say),
Castles, and groves, and music sweet,
The senses of the trav'ller meet,
And stop him in his way.

3 But while he listens with surprise,
The charm dissolves, the vision dies,
'Twas but enchanted ground:
Thus if the Lord our spirit touch
The world, which promis'd us so much,
A wilderness is found.

4 At first we start, and feel distress'd,
Convinc'd we never can have rest
In such a wretched place;
But he whose mercy breaks the charm,
Reveals his own Almighty arm,
And bids us seek his face.

5 Then we begin to live indeed,
When from our sin and bondage freed
By this beloved Friend;
We follow him from day to day,
Assur'd of grace through all the way,
And glory at the end.

OLNEY HYMNS,

&c.

BOOK III.

ON THE RISE, PROGRESS, CHANGES, AND COMFORTS OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE;

Under the following Heads:

I. SOLEMN ADDRESSES TO SINNERS.
II. SEEKING, PLEADING, HOPING.
III. CONFLICT.
IV. COMFORT.
V. DEDICATION AND SURRENDER.
VI. CAUTIONS.
VII. PRAISE.
VIII. SHORT HYMNS:
BEFORE SERMON.
AFTER SERMON.
GLORIA PATRI.

I. SOLEMN ADDRESSES TO SINNERS.

HYMN I. *Expostulation.*

1 No words can declare,
No fancy can paint,
What rage and despair,
What hopeless complaint,
Fill Satan's dark dwelling,
The prison beneath;
What weeping and yelling,
And gnashing of teeth!

2 Yet sinners will choose
This dreadful abode;
Each madly pursues
The dangerous road;

Though God give them warning,
They onward will go;
They answer with scorning,
And rush upon woe.

3 How sad to behold
The rich and the poor,
The young and the old,
All blindly secure!
All posting to ruin,
Refusing to stop:
Ah! think what you're doing,
While yet there is hope!

4 How weak is your hand,
To fight with the Lord!
How can you withstand
The edge of his sword?
What hope of escaping
For those who oppose,
When hell is wide gaping
To swallow his foes!

5 How oft have you dar'd
The Lord to his face!
Yet still you are spar'd
To hear of his grace:
Oh! pray for repentance
And life-giving faith,
Before the just sentence
Consign you to death.

6 It is not too late
To Jesus to flee,
His mercy is great,
His pardon is free!

His blood has such virtue,
For all that believe,
That nothing can hurt you,
If him you receive.

II. *Alarm.*

1 Stop, poor sinner! stop and think
Before you farther go!
Will you sport upon the brink
Of everlasting woe?
Once again, I charge you, stop!
For, unless you warning take,
Ere you are aware, you drop
Into the burning lake!

2 Say, have you an arm like God,
That you his will oppose?
Fear you not that iron rod
With which he breaks his foes?
Can you stand in that dread day,
When he judgement shall proclaim,
And the earth shall melt away
Like wax before the flame?

3 Pale-fac'd death will quickly come,
To drag you to his bar;
Then to hear your awful doom
Will fill you with despair:
All your sins will round you crowd,
Sins of a blood-crimson dye;
Each for vengeance crying loud,
And what can you reply?

4 Though your heart be made of steel,
Your forehead lin'd with brass,
God at length will make you feel,
He will not let you pass:
Sinners then in vain will call
(Though they now despise his grace),
Rocks and mountains on us fall,
And hide us from his face.*

5 But as yet there is a hope
You may his mercy know;
Though his arm is lifted up,
He still forbears the blow:
'Twas for sinners Jesus died,
Sinners he invites to come;
None who come shall be deny'd,
He says, "There still is room."†

III. *We were once as you are.*

1 SHALL men pretend to pleasure
Who never knew the Lord?
Can all the worldling's treasure
True peace of mind afford?
They shall obtain this jewel,
And what their hearts desire,
When they, by adding fuel,
Can quench the flame of fire.

2 Till you can bid the ocean,
When furious tempests roar,‡
Forget its wonted motion,
And rage and swell no more:

* Rev. vi. 16. † Luke, xiv. 22. ‡ Isa. lvii. 20, 21.

In vain your expectation
To find content in sin;
Or freedom from vexation
While passions reign within.

3 Come turn your thoughts to Jesus,
If you would good possess;
'Tis he alone that frees us
From guilt and from distress:
When he by faith is present,
The sinner's troubles cease;
His ways are truly pleasant,
And all his paths are peace.*

4 Our time in sin we wasted,
And fed upon the wind;
Until his love we tasted,
No comfort could we find:
But now we stand to witness
His pow'r and grace to you;
May you perceive its fitness,
And call upon him too!

5 Our pleasure and our duty,
Though opposite before,
Since we have seen his beauty,
Are join'd to part no more:
It is our highest pleasure,
No less than duty's call,
To love him beyond measure,
And serve him with our all.

* Prov. iii. 17.

IV. *Prepare to meet God.*

1 SINNER, art thou still secure?
Wilt thou still refuse to pray?
Can thy heart or hands endure
In the Lord's avenging day?
See, his mighty arm is bar'd!
Awful terrors clothe his brow!
For his judgement stand prepar'd,
Thou must either break or bow.

2 At his presence nature shakes,
Earth affrighted hastes to flee,
Solid mountains melt like wax,
What will then become of thee?
Who his advent may abide?
You that glory in your shame,
Will you find a place to hide
When the world is wrapt in flame?

3 Then the rich, the great, the wise,
Trembling, guilty, self-condemn'd,
Must behold the wrathful eyes
Of the Judge they once blasphem'd:
Where are now their haughty looks?
Oh their horror and despair!
When they see the open'd books,
And their dreadful sentence hear!

4 Lord, prepare us by thy grace!
Soon we must resign our breath;
And our souls be call'd, to pass
Through the iron gate of death:

Let us now our day improve,
Listen to the Gospel voice;
Seek the things that are above,
Scorn the world's pretended joys.

5 Oh! when flesh and heart shall fail,
Let thy love our spirits cheer,
Strengthen'd thus we shall prevail
Over Satan, sin, and fear:
Trusting in thy precious name,
May we thus our journey end;
Then our foes shall lose their aim,
And the Judge will be our friend.

V. *Invitation.*

1 SINNERS, hear the Saviour's call,
He now is passing by;
He has seen thy grievous thrall,
And heard thy mournful cry.
He has pardons to impart,
Grace to save thee from thy fears,
See the love that fills his heart,
And wipe away thy tears.

2 Why art thou afraid to come
And tell him all thy case?
He will not pronounce thy doom,
Nor frown thee from his face:
Wilt thou fear Immanuel?
Wilt thou dread the Lamb of God,
Who, to save thy soul from hell,
Has shed his precious blood?

3 Think how on the cross he hung
Pierc'd with a thousand wounds!
Hark, from each as with a tongue
The voice of pardon sounds!
See, from all his bursting veins,
Blood, of wondrous virtue, flow!
Shed to wash away thy stains,
And ransom thee from woe.

4 Though his majesty be great,
His mercy is no less;
Though he thy transgressions hate,
He feels for thy distress;
By himself the Lord has sworn,
He delights not in thy death;*
But invites thee to return,
That thou mayst live by faith.

5 Raise thy downcast eyes and see
What throngs his throne surround!
These, though sinners once like thee,
Have full salvation found:
Yield not then to unbelief!
While he says, "There yet is room;"
Though of sinners thou art chief,
Since Jesus calls thee, come.

SIMILAR HYMNS.

Book I. Hymns 75, 91.
Book II. Hymns 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 35, 77, 78, 83.

* Ezekiel, xxxiii. 11.

II. SEEKING, PLEADING, AND HOPING.

VI. *The Burdened Sinner.*

1 Ah! what can I do,
Or where be secure!
If justice pursue
What heart can endure!
The heart breaks asunder,
Though hard as a stone,
When God speaks in thunder,
And makes himself known.

2 With terror I read
My sins' heavy score;
The number exceeds
The sands on the shore;
Guilt makes me unable
To stand or to flee;
So Cain murder'd Abel,
And trembled like me.

3 Each sin, like his blood,
With a terrible cry,
Calls loudly on God
To strike from on high:
Nor can my repentance
Extorted by fear,
Reverse the just sentence;
'Tis just, though severe.

4 The case is too plain,
I have my own choice;
Again, and again,
I slighted his voice;

His warnings neglected,
His patience abus'd,
His Gospel rejected,
His mercy refus'd.

5 And must I then go,
For ever to dwell
In torments and woe
With devils in hell!
Oh! Where is the Saviour
I scorn'd in times past?
His word in my favour
Would save me at last.

6 Lord Jesus, on thee
I venture to call,
Oh look upon me
The vilest of all!
For whom didst thou languish,
And bleed on the tree?
Oh pity my anguish,
And say, "'Twas for thee."

7 A case such as mine
Will honour thy pow'r;
All hell will repine,
All heav'n will adore:
If in condemnation
Strict justice takes place,
It shines in salvation
More glorious through grace.

VII. *Behold, I am vile!*

1 O Lord, how vile am I,
Unholy and unclean!
How can I dare to venture nigh
With such a load of sin?

2 Is this polluted heart
A dwelling fit for thee?
Swarming, alas! in ev'ry part,
What evils do I see!

3 If I attempt to pray,
And lisp thy holy name,
My thoughts are hurry'd soon away,
I know not where I am.

4 If in thy word I look,
Such darkness fills my mind,
I only read a sealed book,
But no relief can find.

5 Thy Gospel oft I hear,
But hear it still in vain;
Without desire, or love, or fear,
I like a stone remain.

6 Myself can hardly bear
This wretched heart of mine;
How hateful then it must appear
To those pure eyes of thine.

7 And must I then indeed
Sink in despair and die?
Fain would I hope that thou didst bleed
For such a wretch as I.

8 That blood which thou hast spilt,
That grace which is thine own,
Can cleanse the vilest sinner's guilt,
And soften hearts of stone.

9 Low at thy feet I bow,
Oh pity and forgive;
Here will I lie, and wait till thou
Shalt bid me rise and live.

VIII. C. *The shining Light.*

1 My former hopes are fled,
My terror now begins;
I feel, alas! that I am dead
In trespasses and sins.

2 Ah, whither shall I fly?
I hear the thunder roar;
The law proclaims destruction nigh,
And vengeance at the door.

3 When I review my ways,
I dread impending doom;
But sure a friendly whisper says,
"Flee from the wrath to come."

4 I see, or think I see,
A glimm'ring from afar:
A beam of day that shines for me,
To save me from despair.

5 Fore-runner of the sun,*
It marks the pilgrim's way;
I'll gaze upon it while I run,
And watch the rising day.

* Psal. cxxx. 6.

IX. *Encouragement.*

1 My soul is beset
With grief and dismay,
I owe a vast debt,
And nothing can pay:
I must go to prison,
Unless that dear Lord,
Who dy'd and is risen,
His pity afford.

2 The death that he dy'd,
The blood that he spilt,
To sinners apply'd,
Discharge from all guilt:
This great intercessor
Can give, if he please,
The vilest transgressor
Immediate release.

3 When nail'd to the tree,
He answer'd the pray'r
Of one, who, like me,
Was nigh to despair;*
He did not upbraid him
With all he had done,
But instantly made him
A saint and a son.

4 The jailer, I read,
A pardon receiv'd:†
And how was he freed?
He only believ'd:

* Luke, xxiii. 43. † Acts, xvi. 31.

His case mine resembled,
Like me he was foul,
Like me too he trembled,
But faith made him whole.

5 Though Saul in his youth,
To madness enrag'd,
Against the Lord's truth
And people engag'd;
Yet Jesus, the Saviour,
Whom long he revil'd,*
Receiv'd him to favour,
And made him a child.

6 A foe to all good,
In wickedness skill'd,
Manasseh, with blood,
Jerusalem fill'd;
In evil long harden'd,
The Lord he defy'd;
Yet he too was pardon'd,
When mercy he cry'd.†

7 Of sinners the chief,
And viler than all,
The jailer or thief,
Manasseh or Saul:
Since they were forgiv'n,
Why should I despair,
While Christ is in heav'n,
And still answers pray'r?

* 1 Tim. i. 16. † 2 Chron. xxxiii. 12, 13.

X. *The Waiting Soul.*

1 Breathe from the gentle south, O Lord,
And cheer me from the north;
Blow on the treasures of thy word,
And call the spices forth!

2 I wish, thou know'st, to be resign'd,
And wait with patient hope;
But hope delay'd fatigues the mind,
And drinks the spirits up.

3 Help me to reach the distant goal,
Confirm my feeble knee,
Pity the sickness of a soul
That faints for love of thee.

4 Cold as I feel this heart of mine,
Yet since I feel it so,
It yields some hope of life divine
Within, however low.

5 I seem forsaken and alone,
I hear the lion roar;
And ev'ry door is shut but one,
And that is mercy's door.

6 There, till the dear Deliv'rer come,
I'll wait with humble pray'r;
And when he calls his exile home,
The Lord shall find him there.

XI. *The Effort.*

1 Cheer up, my soul, there is a mercy-seat
Sprinkled with blood, where Jesus answers pray'
There humbly cast thyself beneath his feet,
For never needy sinner perish'd there.

2 Lord, I am come! thy promise is my plea,
Without thy word I durst not venture nigh;
But thou hast call'd the burden'd soul to thee,
A weary burden'd soul, O Lord, am I!

3 Bow'd down beneath a heavy load of sin,
By Satan's fierce temptations sorely prest,
Beset without, and full of fears within,
Trembling and faint I come to thee for rest.

4 Be thou my refuge, Lord, my hiding-place,
I know no force can tear me from thy side;
Unmov'd I then may all accusers face,
And answer ev'ry charge with "Jesus dy'd."

5 Yes, thou didst weep, and bleed, and groan, and die,
Well hast thou known what fierce temptations mean,
Such was thy love, and now, enthron'd on high,
The same compassions in thy bosom reign.

6 Lord, give me faith—he hears—what grace is this!
Dry up thy tears, my soul, and cease to grieve:
He shows me what he did, and who he is,
I must, I will, I can, I do believe.

XII. *The Effort—in another Measure.*

1 Approach, my soul, the mercy-seat
Where Jesus answers pray'r;
There humbly fall before his feet,
For none can perish there.

2 Thy promise is my only plea,
With this I venture nigh;
Thou callest burden'd souls to thee,
And such, O Lord, am I.

3 Bow'd down beneath a load of sin,
By Satan sorely prest;
By war without, and fears within,
I come to thee for rest.

4 Be thou my shield and hiding-place!
That, shelter'd near thy side,
I may my fierce accuser face,
And tell him, "Thou hast dy'd."

5 Oh wondrous love! to bleed and die,
To bear the cross and shame,
That guilty sinners, such as I,
Might plead thy gracious name.

6 "Poor tempest-tossed soul, be still,
"My promis'd grace receive:"
'Tis Jesus speaks—I must, I will,
I can, I do believe.

XIII. *Seeking the Beloved.*

1 To those who know the Lord, I speak,
Is my beloved near?
The bridegroom of my soul I seek,
Oh! when will he appear?

2 Though once a man of grief and shame,
Yet now he fills a throne,
And bears the greatest, sweetest name,
That earth or heav'n have known.

3 Grace flies before, and love attends
His steps where'er he goes;
Though none can see him but his friends,
And they were once his foes.

4 He speaks—obedient to his call
Our warm affections move
Did he but shine alike on all,
Then all alike would love.

5 Then love in ev'ry heart would reign,
And war would cease to roar;
And cruel and blood-thirsty men
Would thirst for blood no more.

6 Such Jesus is, and such his grace,
Oh may he shine on you!
And tell him, when you see his face,
I long to see him too.*

XIV. *Rest for weary Souls.*

1 Does the Gospel-word proclaim
Rest for those who weary be?†
Then, my soul, put in thy claim,
Sure that promise speaks to thee:
Marks of grace I cannot show,
All polluted is my best;
Yet I weary am I know,
And the weary long for rest.

2 Burden'd with a load of sin,
Harass'd with tormenting doubt,
Hourly conflicts from within,
Hourly crosses from without:
All my little strength is gone,
Sink I must without supply;
Sure upon the earth is none
Can more weary be than I.

* Cant. v. 8. † Matt. xi. 28.

3 In the ark, the weary dove
Found a welcome resting-place;*
Thus my spirit longs to prove
Rest in Christ, the ask of grace:
Tempest-toss'd I long have been,
And the flood increases fast;
Open, Lord, and take me in,
Till the storm be overpast.

4 Safely lodg'd within thy breast,
What a wondrous change I find!
Now I know thy promis'd rest
Can compose a troubled mind:
You that weary are like me,
Hearken to the Gospel call;
To the ark for refuge flee,
Jesus will receive you all!

SIMILAR HYMNS.

Book I. Hymns 45, 69, 82, 83, 84, 96.
Book II. Hymn 29.

III. CONFLICT.

XV. C. *Light shining out of Darkness.*

1 God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform;
He plants his footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm.

* Gen. viii. 9.

2 Deep in unfathomable mines
Of never-failing skill,
He treasures up his bright designs,
And works his sov'reign will.

3 Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take,
The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy, and shall break
In blessings on your head.

4 Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust him for his grace;
Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face.

5 His purposes will ripen fast,
Unfolding ev'ry hour;
The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flow'r.

6 Blind unbelief is sure to err,*
And scan his work in vain;
God is his own interpreter,
And he will make it plain.

XVI. C. *Welcome Cross.*

1 'Tis my happiness below
Not to live without the cross,
But the Saviour's pow'r to know,
Sanctifying ev'ry loss:
Trials must and will befall;
But with humble faith to see
Love inscrib'd upon them all,
This is happiness to me.

* John, xiii. 7.

2 God, in Israel, sows the seeds
Of affliction, pain, and toil;
These spring up, and choke the weeds
Which would else o'erspread the soil:
Trials make the promise sweet,
Trials give new life to pray'r;
Trials bring me to his feet,
Lay me low, and keep me there.

3 Did I meet no trials here,
No chastisement by the way;
Might I not, with reason, fear
I should prove a cast-away:
Bastards may escape the rod,*
Sunk in earthly, vain delight;
But the true-born child of God
Must not, would not, if he might.

XVII. C. *Affliction sanctified by the Word.*

1 O HOW I love thy holy word,
Thy gracious covenant, O Lord!
It guides me in the peaceful way,
I think upon it all the day.

2 What are the mines of shining wealth,
The strength of youth, the bloom of health!
What are all joys compar'd with those
Thine everlasting word bestows!

3 Long unafflicted, undismay'd,
In pleasure's path secure I stray'd;
Thou mad'st me feel thy chast'ning rod,
And straight I turn'd unto my God. †

* Heb. xii. 8. † Psal. cxix. 71.

4 What though it pierc'd my fainting heart,
I bless thine hand that caus'd the smart;
It taught my tears a while to flow,
But sav'd me from eternal woe.

5 Oh! hadst thou left me unchastis'd,
Thy precept I had still despis'd;
And still the snare in secret laid,
Had my unwary feet betray'd.

6 I love thee, therefore, O my God,
And breathe towards thy dear abode;
Where in thy presence fully blest,
Thy chosen saints for ever rest.

XVIII. C. *Temptation.*

1 The billows swell, the winds are high,
Clouds overcast my wintry sky;
Out of the depths to thee I call,
My fears are great, my strength is small.

2 O Lord, the pilot's part perform,
And guide and guard me through the storm;
Defend me from each threat'ning ill,
Control the waves, say, "Peace, be still."

3 Amidst the roaring of the sea,
My soul still hangs her hopes on thee;
Thy constant love, thy faithful care,
Is all that saves me from despair.

4 Dangers of ev'ry shape and name
Attend the followers of the Lamb,
Who leave the world's deceitful shore,
And leave it to return no more.

5 Though tempest-toss'd and half a wreck,
My Saviour through the floods I seek;
Let neither winds nor stormy main
Force back my shatter'd bark again.

XIX. C. *Looking upwards in a Storm.*

1 God of my life, to thee I call,
Afflicted at thy feet I fall;
When the great water-floods prevail,
Leave not my trembling heart to fail!*

2 Friend of the friendless, and the faint!
Where should I lodge my deep complaint?
Where but with thee, whose open door
Invites the helpless and the poor!

3 Did ever mourner plead with thee,
And thou refuse that mourner's plea?
Does not the word still fix'd remain,
That none shall seek thy face in vain?

4 That were a grief I could not bear,
Didst thou not hear and answer pray'r;
But a pray'r-hearing, answ'ring God,
Supports me under ev'ry load.

5 Fair is the lot that's cast for me;
I have an advocate with thee;
They whom the world caresses most,
Have no such privilege to boast.

6 Poor though I am, despis'd, forgot,†
Yet God, my God, forgets me not;
And he is safe, and must succeed,
For whom the Lord vouchsafes to plead.

* Psal. lxix. 15. † Psal. xl. 17.

XX. C. *The Valley of the Shadow of Death.*

1 My soul is sad and much dismay'd;
See, Lord, what legions of my foes,
With fierce Apollyon at their head,
My heav'nly pilgrimage oppose!

2 See, from the ever-burning lake,
How like a smoky cloud they rise!
With horrid blasts my soul they shake,
With storms of blasphemies and lies.

3 Their fiery arrows reach the mark,*
My throbbing heart with anguish tear;
Each lights upon a kindred spark,
And finds abundant fuel there.

4 I hate the thought that wrongs the Lord;
Oh! I would drive it from my breast,
With thy own sharp two-edged sword,
Far as the east is from the west.

5 Come then, and chase the cruel host,
Heal the deep wounds I have receiv'd!
Nor let the pow'rs of darkness boast,
That I am foil'd, and thou art griev'd!

XXI. *The Storm hushed.*

1 'Tis past—the dreadful stormy night
Is gone, with all its fears!
And now I see returning light,
The Lord, my Sun, appears.

* Eph. vi. 16.

2 The tempter, who but lately said,
I soon shall be his prey,
Has heard my Saviour's voice, and fled
With shame and grief away.

3 Ah! Lord, since thou didst hide thy face,
What has my soul endur'd?
But now 'tis past, I feel thy grace,
And all my wounds are cur'd!

4 Oh wondrous change! but just before
Despair beset me round,
I heard the lion's horrid roar,
And trembled at the sound.

5 Before corruption, guilt, and fear,
My comforts blasted fell;
And unbelief discover'd near
The dreadful depths of hell.

6 But Jesus pity'd my distress,
He heard my feeble cry,
Reveal'd his blood and righteousness,
And brought salvation nigh.

7 Beneath the banner of his love
I now secure remain;
The tempter frets, but dares not move,
To break my peace again.

8 Lord, since thou thus hast broke my bands,
And set the captive free,
I would devote my tongue, my hands,
My heart, my all, to thee.

XXII. *Help in the Time of Need.*

1 Unless the Lord had been my stay
(With trembling joy my soul may say),
My cruel foe had gain'd his end:
But he appear'd for my relief,
And Satan sees, with shame and grief,
That I have an Almighty Friend.

2 Oh! 'twas a dark and trying hour,
When harass'd by the tempter's pow'r,
I felt my strongest hopes decline!
You only who have known his arts,
You only who have felt his darts,
Can pity such a case as mine.

3 Loud in my ears a charge he read
(My conscience witness'd all he said),
My long black list of outward sin;
Then bringing forth my heart to view,
Too well what's hidden there he knew,
He show'd me ten times worse within.

4 'Tis all too true, my soul reply'd,
But I remember Jesus dy'd,
And now he fills a throne of grace;
I'll go, as I have done before,
His mercy I may still implore,
I have his promise, "Seek my face."

5 But as when sudden fogs arise,
The trees and hills, the sun and skies,
Are all at once conceal'd from view;
So clouds of horror, black as night,
By Satan rais'd, hid from my sight
The throne of grace and promise too.

[illegible] tear.
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible] tear away,
[illegible]

[illegible] storm.

[illegible] my mind,
[illegible] appears;
[illegible]
[illegible] ars.

[illegible] heart,
[illegible]
[illegible] art.
[illegible] thee!

[illegible] aught
[illegible] rm;
[illegible] not,
[illegible] rm.

[illegible] eat.
[illegible] d,
[illegible]
[illegible] ude.

[illegible] from thee
[illegible]
[illegible] away,
[illegible] still.

[illegible] forgive,
[illegible] repine;
[illegible] the praise receive;
[illegible] self-abhorrence mine.

XXIV. C. *Mourning and Longing.*

1 The Saviour hides his face!
My Spirit thirsts to prove
Renew'd supplies of pard'ning grace,
And never-fading love.

2 The favour'd souls who know
What glories shine in him,
Pant for his presence, as the roe
Pants for the living stream!

3 What trifles tease me now!
They swarm like summer flies,
They cleave to ev'ry thing I do,
And swim before my eyes.

4 How dull the Sabbath-day,
Without the Sabbath's Lord!
How toilsome then to sing and pray,
And wait upon the word!

5 Of all the truths I hear,
How few delight my taste!
I glean a berry here and there,
But mourn the vintage past.

6 Yet let me (as I ought)
Still hope to be supply'd;
No pleasure else is worth a thought,
Nor shall I be deny'd.

7 Though I am but a worm,
Unworthy of his care,
The Lord will my desire perform,
And grant me all my pray'r.

XXV. *Rejoice the Soul of thy Servant.*

1 When my pray'rs are a burden and task,
No wonder I little receive;
O Lord, make me willing to ask,
Since thou art so ready to give:
Although I am bought with thy blood,
And all thy salvation is mine;
At a distance from thee my chief good,
I wander, and languish, and pine.

2 Of thy goodness of old, when I read,
To those who were sinners like me,
Why may I not wrestle and plead,
With them a partaker to be?
Thine arm is not shorten'd since then,
And those who believe in thy name,
Ever find thou art Yea and Amen,
Through all generations the same.

3 While my spirit within me is prest
With sorrow, temptation, and fear,
Like John, I would flee to thy breast,*
And pour my complaints in thine ear:
How happy and favour'd was he,
Who could on thy bosom repose!
Might this favour be granted to me,
I'd smile at the rage of my foes.

4 I have heard of thy wonderful name,
How great and exalted thou art;
But, ah! I confess to my shame,
It faintly impresses my heart:

* John, xiii. 25.

The beams of thy glory display,
As PETER once saw thee appear;
That, transported like him, I may say,
"It is good for my soul to be here."*

5 What a sorrow and weight didst thou feel,
When nail'd, for my sake, to the tree!
My heart sure is harder than steel,
To feel no more sorrow for thee:
Oh! let me with THOMAS descry
The wounds in thy hands and thy side,
And have feelings like his, when I cry,
"My God and my Saviour has dy'd!"†

6 But if thou hast appointed me still
To wrestle, and suffer, and fight;
O make me resign to thy will,
For all thine appointments are right:
This mercy, at least, I entreat,
That, knowing how vile I have been,
I, with MARY, may wait at thy feet,‡
And weep o'er the pardon of sin.

XXVI. C. *Self-acquaintance.*

1 DEAR Lord! accept a sinful heart,
Which of itself complains,
And mourns, with much and frequent smart,
The evil it contains.

2 There fiery seeds of anger lurk,
Which often hurt my frame;
And wait but for the tempter's work,
To fan them to a flame.

* Matt. xvii. 4. † John, xx. 28. ‡ Luke, vii. 38.

3 Legality holds out a bribe
To purchase life from thee;
And discontent would fain prescribe
How thou shalt deal with me.

4 While unbelief withstands thy grace,
And puts the mercy by;
Presumption, with a brow of brass,
Says, "Give me, or I die."

5 How eager are my thoughts to roam
In quest of what they love!
But, ah! when duty calls them home,
How heavily they move!

6 Oh, cleanse me in a Saviour's blood,
Transform me by thy pow'r,
And make me thy belov'd abode,
And let me rove no more.

XXVII. *Bitter and Sweet.*

1 KINDLE, Saviour, in my heart,
A flame of love divine;
Hear, for mine I trust thou art,
And sure I would be thine;
If my soul has felt thy grace,
If to me thy name is known;
Why should trifles fill the place
Due to thyself alone?

2 'Tis a strange mysterious life
I live from day to day;
Light and darkness, peace and strife,
Bear an alternate sway:

When I think the battle won,
I have to fight it o'er again;
When I say I'm overthrown,
Relief I soon obtain.

3 Often at the mercy-seat,
While calling on thy name,
Swarms of evil thoughts I meet,
Which fill my soul with shame.
Agitated in my mind,
Like a feather in the air,
Can I thus a blessing find?
My soul, can this be pray'r?

4 But when Christ, my Lord and Friend,
Is pleas'd to show his pow'r;
All at once my troubles end,
And I've a golden hour;
Then I see his smiling face,
Feel the pledge of joys to come:
Often, Lord, repeat this grace
Till thou shalt call me home.

XXVIII. C. *Prayer for Patience.*

1 Lord, who hast suffer'd all for me,
My peace and pardon to procure,
The lighter cross I bear for thee,
Help me with patience to endure.

2 The storm of loud repining, hush,
I would in humble silence mourn;
Why should th' unburnt, though burning bush,
Be angry as the crackling thorn?

3 Man should not faint at thy rebuke,
Like Joshua falling on his face,*
When the curs'd thing that Achan took,
Brought Israel into just disgrace.

4 Perhaps some golden wedge suppress'd,
Some secret sin offends my God;
Perhaps that Babylonish vest,
Self-righteousness, provokes the rod.

5 Ah! were I buffetted all day,
Mock'd, crown'd with thorns, and spit upon;
I yet should have no right to say,
My great distress is mine alone.

6 Let me not angrily declare
No pain was ever sharp like mine;
Nor murmur at the cross I bear,
But rather weep, rememb'ring thine.

XXIX. C. *Submission.*

1 O Lord, my best desire fulfil,
And help me to resign
Life, health, and comfort to thy will,
And make thy pleasure mine.

2 Why should I shrink at thy command,
Whose love forbids my fears?
Or tremble at the gracious hand
That wipes away my tears?

3 No, let me rather freely yield
What most I prize to thee;
Who never hast a good withheld,
Or wilt withhold from me.

* Joshua, vii. 10, 11.

4 Thy favour, all my journey through,
Thou art engag'd to grant;
What else I want, or think I do,
'Tis better still to want.

5 Wisdom and mercy guide my way,
Shall I resist them both?
A poor blind creature of a day,
And crush'd before the moth!

6 But, ah! my inward spirit cries,
Still bind me to thy sway;
Else the next cloud that veils my skies,
Drives all these thoughts away.

XXX. *Why should I complain?*

1 When my Saviour, my Shepherd, is near,
How quickly my sorrows depart!
New beauties around me appear,
New spirits enliven my heart:
His presence gives peace to my soul,
And Satan assaults me in vain;
While my Shepherd his power controls,
I think I no more shall complain.

2 But alas! what a change do I find,
When my Shepherd withdraws from my sight!
My fears all return to my mind,
My day is soon chang'd into night:
Then Satan his effort renews
To vex and ensare me again:
All my pleasing enjoyments I lose,
And can only lament and complain.

3 By these changes I often pass through,
I am taught my own weakness to know;
I am taught what my Shepherd can do,
And how much to his mercy I owe;

It is he that supports me through all;
When I faint he revives me again;
He attends to my pray'r when I call,
And bids me no longer complain.

4 Wherefore then should I murmur and grieve?
Since my Shepherd is always the same,
And has promis'd he never will leave *
The soul that confides in his name:
To relieve me from all that I fear,
He was buffetted, tempted, and slain;
And at length he will surely appear,
Though he leaves me a while to complain.

5 While I dwell in an enemy's land,
Can I hope to be always in peace?
'Tis enough that my Shepherd's at hand,
And that shortly this warfare will cease;
For ere long he will bid me remove †
From this region of sorrow and pain,
To abide in his presence above,
And then I no more shall complain.

XXXI. *Return, O Lord, how long,*

1 Return to bless my waiting eyes,
And cheer my mourning heart, O Lord!
Without thee, all beneath the skies
No real pleasure can afford.

2 When thy lov'd presence meets my sight,
It softens care and sweetens toil;
The sun shines forth with double light,
The whole creation wears a smile.

* Jer. i. 19. † Rev. ii. 10.

3 Upon thine arm of love I rest,
Thy gracious voice forbids my fear;
No storms disturb my peaceful breast,
No foes assault when thou art near.

4 But, ah! since thou hast been away,
Nothing but trouble have I known;
And Satan marks me for his prey,
Because he sees me left alone.

5 My sun is hid, my comforts lost,
My graces droop, my sins revive;
Distress'd, dismay'd, and tempest-toss'd,
My soul is only just alive!

6 Lord, hear my cry, and come again!
Put all mine enemies to shame;
And let them see 'tis not in vain
That I have trusted in thy name.

XXXII. *Cast down, but not destroyed.*

1 Though sore beset with guilt and fear,
I cannot, dare not, quite despair;
If I must perish, would the Lord
Have taught my heart to love his word?
Would he have giv'n me eyes to see
My danger and my remedy;
Reveal'd his name, and bid me pray,
Had he resolv'd to say me nay?*

2 No—though cast down, I am not slain;
I fall, but I shall rise again;†
The present, Satan, is thy hour,
But Jesus shall control thy pow'r:

* Judges, xiii. 23. † Micah, vii. 8.

His love will plead for my relief,
He hears my groans, he sees my grief;
Nor will he suffer thee to boast,
A soul that sought his help was lost.

3 'Tis true, I have unfaithful been,
And griev'd his Spirit by my sin;
Yet still his mercy he'll reveal,
And all my wounds and follies heal:
Abounding sin, I must confess,
But more abounding is his grace;*
He once vouchsaf'd for me to bleed,
And now he lives my cause to plead,

4 I'll cast myself before his feet,
I see him on his mercy-seat
('Tis sprinkled with atoning blood);
There sinners find access to God:
Ye burden'd souls, approach with me,
And make the Saviour's name your plea;
Jesus will pardon all who come,
And strike our fierce accuser dumb.

XXXIII. *The benighted Traveller.*

1 Forest beasts, that live by prey,
Seldom show themselves by day;
But when day-light is withdrawn,†
Then they rove and roar till dawn.

2 Who can tell the trav'ller's fears,
When their horrid yells he hears?
Terror almost stops his breath,
While each step he looks for death.

* Rom. v. 20. † Psal. civ. 20.

3 Thus when Jesus is in view,
Cheerful I my way pursue;
Walking by my Saviour's light,
Nothing can my soul affright.

4 But when he forbears to shine,
Soon the trav'ller's case is mine;
Lost, benighted, struck with dread,
What a painful path I tread!

5 Then my soul with terror hears
Worse than lions, wolves, or bears,
Roaring loud in ev'ry part,
Through the forest of my heart.

6 Wrath, impatience, envy, pride,
Satan and his host beside,
Press around me to devour;
How can I escape their pow'r?

7 Gracious Lord, afford me light,
Put these beasts of prey to flight;
Let thy pow'r and love be shown;*
Save me, for I am thine own.

XXXIV. *The Prisoner.*

1 When the poor pris'ner through a grate
Sees others walk at large,
How does he mourn his lonely state,
And long for a discharge!

2 Thus I, confin'd in unbelief,
My loss of freedom mourn;
And spend my hours in fruitless grief,
Until my Lord return.

* Psal. cxix. 94.

3 The beam of day, which pierces through
The gloom in which I dwell,
Only discloses to my view
The horrors of my cell.

4 Ah! how my pensive spirit faints,
To think of former days!
When I could triumph with the saints,
And join their songs of praise.

5 But now my joys are all cut off,
In prison I am cast;
And Satan, with a cruel scoff,
Says, "Where's your God at last?" *

6 Dear Saviour, for thy mercy's sake,
My strong, my only plea,
These gates and bars in pieces break,
And set the pris'ner free! †

7 Surely my soul shall sing to thee,
For liberty restor'd;
And all thy saints admire to see
The mercies of the Lord.

XXXV. *Perplexity relieved.*

1 Uncertain how the way to find
Which to salvation led,
I listen'd long, with anxious mind,
To hear what others said.

2 When some of joys and comforts told,
I fear'd that I was wrong;
For I was stupid, dead, and cold,
Had neither joy nor song.

* Psal. cxv. 2. † Psal. cxlii. 7.

3 The Lord my lab'ring heart reliev'd,
And made my burden light;
Then for a moment I believ'd,
Supposing all was right.

4 Of fierce temptations others talk'd,
Of anguish and dismay,
Through what distresses they had walk'd,
Before they found the way.

5 Ah! then I thought my hopes were vain,
For I had liv'd at ease;
I wish'd for all my fears again,
To make me more like these.

6 I had my wish; the Lord disclos'd
The evils of my heart,
And left my naked soul expos'd
To Satan's fiery dart.

7 Alas! "I now must give it up,"
I cry'd in deep despair;
How could I dream of drawing hope
From what I cannot bear!

8 Again my Saviour brought me aid,
And when he set me free,
"Trust simply on my word," he said,
"And leave the rest to me."

XXXVI. *Prayer answered by Crosses.*

1 I ASK'D the Lord, that I might grow
In faith, and love, and ev'ry grace,
Might more of his salvation know,
And seek more earnestly his face.

2 'Twas he who taught me thus to pray,
And he, I trust has answer'd pray'r;
But it has been in such a way,
As almost drove me to despair.

3 I hop'd that in some favour'd hour,
At once he'd answer my request:
And by his love's constraining pow'r,
Subdue my sins, and give me rest.

4 Instead of this, he made me feel
The hidden evils of my heart;
And let the angry pow'rs of hell
Assault my soul in ev'ry part.

5 Yea more, with his own hand he seem'd
Intent to aggravate my woe;
Cross'd all the fair designs I schem'd,
Blasted my gourds, and laid me low.

6 Lord, why is this, I trembling cry'd,
Wilt thou pursue thy worm to death?
"'Tis in this way," the Lord reply'd,
"I answer pray'r for grace and faith.

7 "These inward trials I employ,
"From self and pride to set thee free;
"And break thy schemes of earthly joy,
"That thou mayst seek thy all in me."

XXXVII. *I will trust, and not be afraid.*

1 Begone, unbelief,
My Saviour is near,
And for my relief
Will surely appear:

By pray'r let me wrestle,
And he will perform;
With Christ in the vessel,
I smile at the storm.

2 Though dark be my way,
Since he is my guide,
'Tis mine to obey,
'Tis his to provide;
Though cisterns be broken,
And creatures all fail,
The word he has spoken
Shall surely prevail.

3 His love in time past
Forbids me to think
He'll leave me at last
In trouble to sink;
Each sweet Ebenezer
I have in review,
Confirms his good pleasure
To help me quite through.

4 Determin'd to save,
He watch'd o'er my path,
When, Satan's blind slave,
I sported with death;
And can he have taught me
To trust in his name,
And thus far have brought me,
To put me to shame?

5 Why should I complain
Of want or distress,
Temptation or pain?
He told me no less:

The heirs of salvation,
I know from his word,
Through much tribulation
Must follow their Lord.*

6 How bitter that cup,
No heart can conceive,
Which he drank quite up,
That sinners might live!
His way was much rougher
And darker than mine;
Did Jesus thus suffer,
And shall I repine?

7 Since all that I meet
Shall work for my good,
The bitter is sweet,
The med'cine is food;
Though painful at present,
'Twill cease before long,
And then, oh! how pleasant
The conqueror's song! †

XXXVIII. *Questions to Unbelief.*

1 If to Jesus for relief
My soul has fled by pray'r,
Why should I give way to grief,
Or heart-consuming care?
Are not all things in his hand?
Has he not his promise past?
Will he then regardless stand,
And let me sink at last?

* Acts, xiv. 22. † Rom. viii. 37.

2 While I know his providence
Disposes each event,
Shall I judge by feeble sense,
And yield to discontent?
If he worms and sparrows feed,
Clothe the grass in rich array,*
Can he see a child in need,
And turn his eye away?

3 When his name was quite unknown,
And sin my life employ'd;
Then he watch'd me as his own,
Or I had been destroy'd:
Now his mercy-seat I know,
Now by grace am reconcil'd;
Would he spare me while a foe,
To leave me when a child?†

4 If he all my wants supply'd,
When I disdain'd to pray,
Now his Spirit is my guide,
How can he say me nay?
If he would not give me up
When my soul against him fought,
Will he disappoint the hope
Which he himself has wrought?

5 If he shed his precious blood
To bring me to his fold,
Can I think that meaner good
He ever will withhold?‡

* Matt. vi. 26. † Rom. v. 10. ‡ Rom. viii. 32.

Satan, vain is thy device!
Here my hope rests well assur'd;
In that great redemption-price,
I see the whole secur'd.

XXXIX. *Great Effects by weak Means.*

1 Unbelief the soul dismays,
What objections will it raise!
But true faith securely leans
On the promise, in the means.

2 If to faith it once be known,
God has said, "It shall be done,
"And in this appointed way;"
Faith has then no more to say.

3 Moses' rod, by faith uprear'd,
Through the sea a path prepar'd; *
Jericho's devoted wall
At the trumpet's sound must fall.†

4 With a pitcher and a lamp,
Gideon overthrew a camp; ‡
And a stone, well aim'd by faith,
Prov'd the arm'd Philistine's death.§

5 Thus the Lord is pleas'd to try
Those who on his help rely;
By the means he makes it known,
That the pow'r is all his own.

* Exod. xiv. 21. † Joshua, vi. 20.
‡ Judges, vii. 22. § 1 Sam. xvii. 49.

6 Yet the means are not in vain,
If the end we would obtain;
Though the breath of pray'r be weak,
None shall find but they who seek.

7 God alone the heart can reach;
Yet the ministers must preach;
'Tis their part the seed to sow,
And 'tis his to make it grow.

XL. *Why art thou cast down?*

1 Be still, my heart! these anxious cares
To thee are burdens, thorns, and snares,
They cast dishonour on thy Lord,
And contradict his gracious word.

2 Brought safely by his hand thus far,
Why wilt thou now give place to fear?
How canst thou want if he provide,
Or lose thy way with such a guide?

3 When first before his mercy-seat,
Thou didst to him thy all commit;
He gave thee warrant, from that hour,
To trust his wisdom, love, and pow'r.

4 Did ever trouble yet befall,
And he refuse to hear thy call?
And has he not his promise past,
That thou shalt overcome at last?

5 Like David, thou mayst comfort draw,
Sav'd from the bear's and lion's paw;
Goliath's rage I may defy,
For God, my Saviour, still is nigh.

6 He who has help'd me hitherto,
Will help me all my journey through,
And give me daily cause to raise
New Ebenezers to his praise.

7 Though rough and thorny be the road,
It leads thee home, apace, to God;
Then count thy present trials small,
For heav'n will make amends for all.

XLI. *The Way of Access.*

1 One glance of thine, eternal Lord,
Pierces all nature through,
Nor heav'n, nor earth, nor hell afford
A shelter from thy view!

2 The mighty whole, each smaller part,
At once before thee lies;
And ev'ry thought of ev'ry heart
Is open to thine eyes.

3 Though greatly from myself conceal'd
Thou see'st my inward frame;
To thee I always stand reveal'd,
Exactly as I am.

4 Since therefore I can hardly bear
What in myself I see;
How vile and black must I appear,
Most holy God, to thee?

5 But since my Saviour stands between,
In garments dy'd in blood,
'Tis he, instead of me, is seen,
When I approach to God.

6 Thus, though a sinner, I am safe;
He pleads before the throne
His life and death in my behalf,
And calls my sins his own.

7 What wondrous love, what mysteries,
In this appointment shine!
My breaches of the law are his,
And his obedience mine.*

XLII. *The Pilgrim's Song.*

1 From Egypt, lately freed
By the Redeemer's grace,
A rough and thorny path we tread,
In hopes to see his face.

2 The flesh dislikes the way,
But faith approves it well;
This only leads to endless day,
All others lead to hell.

3 The promis'd land of peace
Faith keeps in constant view;
How diff'rent from the wilderness
We now are passing through!

4 Here often from our eyes
Clouds hide the light divine;
There we shall have unclouded skies,
Our Sun will always shine.

5 Here griefs, and cares, and pains,
And fears, distress us sore;
But there eternal pleasure reigns,
And we shall weep no more.

* 2 Cor. v. 21.

6 Lord, pardon our complaints,
We follow at thy call;
The joy prepar'd for suff'ring saints
Will make amends for all.

SIMILAR HYMNS.

Book I. Hymns 10, 13, 21, 22, 24, 27, 40, 43, 44, 51, 56, 63, 76, 88, 107, 115, 126, 130, 131, 136, 142.
Book II. Hymns 30, 31, 84, 87, 92.

IV. COMFORT.

XLIII. *Faith a new and comprehensive Sense.*

1 Sight, hearing, feeling, taste, and smell,
Are gifts we highly prize;
But faith does singly each excel,
And all the five comprise.

2 More piercing than the eagle's sight,
It views the world unknown,
Surveys the glorious realms of light,
And Jesus on the throne.

3 It hears the mighty voice of God,
And ponders what he saith;
His word and works, his gifts and rod,
Have each a voice to faith.

4 It feels the touch of heav'nly pow'r,*
And from that boundless source,
Derives fresh vigour ev'ry hour
To run its daily course.

5 The truth and goodness of the Lord
Are suited to its taste;†
Mean is the worldling's pamper'd board,
To faith's perpetual feast.

6 It smells the dear Redeemer's name
Like ointment poured forth;‡
Faith only knows, or can proclaim,
Its savour or its worth.

7 Till saving faith possess the mind,
In vain of sense we boast;
We are but senseless, tasteless, blind,
And deaf, and dead, and lost.

XLIV. C. *The happy Change.*

1 How blest thy creature is, O God,
When, with a single eye,
He views the lustre of thy word,
The day-spring from on high.

2 Through all the storms that veil the skies,
And frown on earthly things;
The Sun of righteousness he eyes,
With healing on his wings.

3 Struck by that light, the human heart,
A barren soil no more,
Sends the sweet smell of grace abroad,
Where serpents lurk'd before.§

* Luke, viii. 46. † Psal. cxix. 103.
‡ Solomon's Song, i. 3. § Isa. xxxv. 7.

4 The soul, a dreary province once
Of Satan's dark domain,
Feels a new empire form'd within,
And owns a heav'nly reign.

5 The glorious orb, whose golden beams
The fruitful year control,
Since first, obedient to thy word,
He started from the goal,

6 Has cheer'd the nations with the joys
His orient rays impart;
But, Jesus, 'tis thy light alone
Can shine upon the heart.

XLV. C. *Retirement.*

1 Far from the world, O Lord, I flee,
From strife and tumult far;
From scenes where Satan wages still
His most successful war.

2 The calm retreat, the silent shade,
With pray'r and praise agree;
And seem by thy sweet bounty made,
For those who follow thee.

3 There if thy Spirit touch the soul,
And grace her mean abode,
Oh, with what peace, and joy, and love,
She communes with her God!

4 There, like the nightingale, she pours
Her solitary lays;
Nor asks a witness of her song,
Nor thirsts for human praise.

5 Author and Guardian of my life,
Sweet source of light divine,
And (all harmonious names in one)
My Saviour, thou art mine!

6 What thanks I owe thee, and what love,
A boundless, endless store,
Shall echo through the realms above
When time shall be no more.

XLVI. Jesus *my all.*

1 Why should I fear the darkest hour,
Or tremble at the tempter's pow'r?
Jesus vouchsafes to be my tow'r.

2 Though hot the fight, why quit the field?
Why must I either flee or yield,
Since Jesus is my mighty shield?

3 When creature-comforts fade and die,
Worldlings may weep; but why should I?
Jesus still lives, and still is nigh.

4 Though all the flocks and herds were dead,
My soul a famine need not dread,
For Jesus is my living bread.

5 I know not what may soon betide,
Or how my wants shall be supply'd;
But Jesus knows, and will provide.

6 Though sin would fill me with distress,
The throne of grace I dare address,
For Jesus is my righteousness.

7 Though faint my pray'rs, and cold my love,
My steadfast hope shall not remove.
While Jesus intercedes above.

8 Against me earth and hell combine;
But on my side is pow'r divine;
Jesus is all, and he is mine.

XLVII. C. *The Hidden Life.*

1 To tell the Saviour all my wants,
How pleasing is the task!
Nor less to praise him when he grants
Beyond what I can ask.

2 My lab'ring spirit vainly seeks
To tell but half the joy;
With how much tenderness he speaks,
And helps me to reply.

3 Nor were it wise, nor should I choose
Such secrets to declare;
Like precious wines, their taste they lose
Expos'd to open air.

4 But this with boldness I proclaim,
Nor care if thousands hear,
Sweet is the ointment of his name,
Not life is half so dear.

5 And can you frown, my former friends,
Who knew what once I was;
And blame the song that thus commends
The man who bore the cross?

6 Trust me, I draw the likeness true,
And not as fancy paints;
Such honour may he give to you,
For such have all his saints.

XLVIII. *Joy and Peace in Believing.*

1 Sometimes a light surprises
The Christian while he sings;
It is the Lord who rises
With healing in his wings:
When comforts are declining,
He grants the soul again
A season of clear shining,
To cheer it after rain.

2 In holy contemplation,
We sweetly then pursue
The theme of God's salvation,
And find it ever new:
Set free from present sorrow,
We cheerfully can say,
E'en let th' unknown to-morrow *
Bring with it what it may.

3 It can bring with it nothing
But he will bear us through;
Who gives the lilies clothing,
Will clothe his people too:
Beneath the spreading heavens,
No creature but is fed;
And he who feeds the ravens,
Will give his children bread.

4 Though vine nor fig-tree neither
Their wonted fruit shall bear,
Though all the field should wither,
Nor flocks nor herds be there:

* Matt. vi. 34.

Yet God the same abiding,
His praise shall tune my voice;
For while in him confiding,
I cannot but rejoice.*

XLIX. C. *True Pleasures.*

1 Lord, my soul with pleasure springs,
When Jesus' name I hear;
And when God the Spirit brings
The word of promise near:
Beauties, too, in holiness,
Still delighted I perceive;
Nor have words that can express
The joys thy precepts give.

2 Cloth'd in sanctity and grace,
How sweet it is to see
Those who love thee as they pass,
Or when they wait on thee!
Pleasant too, to sit and tell
What we owe to love divine;
Till our bosoms grateful swell,
And eyes begin to shine.

3 Those the comforts I possess,
Which God shall still increase.
All his ways are pleasantness,
And all his paths are peace.†
Nothing Jesus did or spoke,
Henceforth let me ever slight;
For I love his easy yoke,
And find his burden light.‡

* Habakkuk, iii. 17, 18. † Prov. iii. 17. ‡ Matt. xi. 30.

L. C. *The Christian.*

1 Honour and happiness unite
To make the Christian's name a praise:
How fair the scene, how clear the light,
That fills the remnant of his days!

2 A kingly character he bears,
No change his priestly office knows;
Unfading is the crown he wears,
His joys can never reach a close.

3 Adorn'd with glory from on high,
Salvation shines upon his face;
His robe is of th' ethereal dye,
His steps are dignity and grace.

4 Inferior honours he disdains,
Nor stoops to take applause from earth;
The King of kings himself maintains
Th' expenses of his heav'nly birth.

5 The noblest creature seen below,
Ordain'd to fill a throne above;
God gives him all he can bestow,
His kingdom of eternal love!

6 My soul is ravish'd at the thought!
Methinks from earth I see him rise;
Angels congratulate his lot,
And shout him welcome to the skies!

LI. C. *Lively Hope and gracious Fear.*

1 I was a grov'lling creature once,
And basely cleav'd to earth;
I wanted spirit to renounce
The clod that gave me birth.

2 But God has breath'd upon a worm,
And sent me, from above,
Wings, such as clothe an angel's form,
The wings of joy and love.

3 With these to Pisgah's top I fly,
And there delighted stand,
To view beneath a shining sky,
The spacious promis'd land.

4 The Lord of all the vast domain
Has promis'd it to me;
The length and breadth of all the plain,
As far as faith can see.

5 How glorious is my privilege!
To thee for help I call;
I stand upon a mountain's edge,
Oh save me, lest I fall!

6 Though much exalted in the Lord,
My strength is not my own;
Then let me tremble at his word,
And none shall cast me down.

LII. *Confidence.*

1 Yes! since God himself has said it,
On the promise I rely;
His good word demands my credit,
What can unbelief reply?
He is strong and can fulfil;
He is truth, and therefore will.

2 As to all the doubts and questions
Which my spirit often grieve,
These are Satan's sly suggestions,
And I need no answer give:
He would fain destroy my hope,
But the promise bears it up.

3 Sure the Lord thus far has brought me
By his watchful tender care;
Sure 'tis he himself has taught me
How to seek his face by pray'r:
After so much mercy past,
Will he give me up at last?

4 True, I've been a foolish creature,
And have sinn'd against his grace;
But forgiveness is his nature,
Though he justly hides his face:
Ere he call'd me, well he knew
What a heart like mine would do.*

5 In my Saviour's intercession
Therefore I will still confide;
Lord, accept my free confession,
I have sinn'd, but thou hast dy'd:†
This is all I have to plead,
This is all the plea I need.

LIII. *Peace restored.*

1 Oh, speak that gracious word again,
And cheer my drooping heart,
No voice but thine can soothe my pain,
Or bid my fears depart.

2 And canst thou still vouchsafe to own
A wretch so vile as I?
And may I still approach thy throne,
And Abba, Father, cry?

* Isa. xlviii. 8. † Rom. viii. 34.

3 Oh, then let saints and angels join,
And help me to proclaim
The grace that heal'd a breach like mine,
And put my foes to shame!

4 How oft did Satan's cruel boast
My troubled soul affright!
He told me I was surely lost,
And God had left me quite.*

5 Guilt made me fear, lest all were true
The lying tempter said;
But now the Lord appears in view,
My enemy is fled.

6 My Saviour, by his pow'rful word,
Has turn'd my night to day;
And his salvation's joys restor'd,
Which I had sinn'd away.

7 Dear Lord, I wonder and adore,
Thy grace is all divine;
Oh keep me, that I sin no more
Against such love as thine!

LIV. *Hear what he has done for my Soul.*

1 Sav'd by blood, I live to tell
What the love of Christ hath done;
He redeem'd my soul from hell,
Of a rebel made a son:
Oh, I tremble still, to think
How secure I liv'd in sin;
Sporting on destruction's brink,
Yet preserv'd from falling in.

* Psal. lxxi. 11.

2 In his own appointed hour,
To my heart the Saviour spoke;
Touch'd me by his Spirit's pow'r,
And my dang'rous slumber broke.
Then I saw and own'd my guilt:
Soon my gracious Lord reply'd,
"Fear not, I my blood have spilt,
"'Twas for such as thee I dy'd."

3 Shame and wonder, joy and love,
All at once possess'd my heart;
Can I hope thy grace to prove
After acting such a part?
"Thou hast greatly sinn'd," he said,
"But I freely all forgive;
"I myself thy debt have paid,
"Now I bid thee rise and live."

4 Come, my fellow-sinners, try;
Jesus' heart is full of love
Oh, that you, as well as I,
May his wondrous mercy prove!
He has sent me to declare,
All is ready, all is free:
Why should any soul despair,
When he sav'd a wretch like me?

LV. *Freedom from Care.*

1 While I liv'd without the Lord,
(If I might be said to live,)
Nothing could relief afford,
Nothing satisfaction give.

2 Empty hopes and groundless fear,
Mov'd by turns my anxious mind;
Like a feather in the air,
Made the sport of ev'ry wind.

3 Now I see, whate'er betide,
All is well if Christ be mine;
He has promis'd to provide,
I have only to resign.

4 When a sense of sin and thrall
Forc'd me to the sinner's Friend,
He engag'd to manage all,
By the way and to the end.

5 "Cast," he said, "on me thy care,*
"'Tis enough that I am nigh;
"I will all thy burdens bear,
"I will all thy wants supply.

6 "Simply follow as I lead,
"Do not reason but believe;
"Call on me in the time of need,
"Thou shalt surely help receive."

7 Lord, I would, I do submit,
Gladly yield my all to thee;
What thy wisdom sees most fit,
Must be, surely, best for me.

8 Only when the way is rough,
And the coward flesh would start,
Let thy promise and thy love
Cheer and animate my heart.

LVI. *Humiliation and Praise.*

Imitated from the German.

1 When the wounded spirit hears
The voice of Jesus' blood,
How the message stops the tears
Which else in vain had flow'd:

* Psal. lv. 22.; 1 Pet. v. 7.

Pardon, grace, and peace proclaim'd,
And the sinner call'd a child;
Then the stubborn heart is tam'd,
Renew'd and reconcil'd.

2 Oh! 'twas grace indeed, to spare
And save a wretch like me!
Men or angels could not bear
What I have offer'd thee;
Were thy bolts at their command,
Hell ere now had been my place;
Thou alone couldst silent stand,
And wait to show thy grace.

3 If in one created mind
The tenderness and love
Of thy saints on earth were join'd,
With all the hosts above;
Still that love were weak and poor,
If compar'd, my Lord, with thine;
Far too scanty to endure
A heart so vile as mine.

4 Wondrous mercy I have found,
But, ah! how faint my praise!
Must I be a cumber-ground,
Unfruitful all my days?
Do I in thy garden grow,
Yet produce thee only leaves!
Lord, forbid it should be so!
The thought my spirit grieves.

5 Heavy charges Satan brings
To fill me with distress;
Let me hide beneath thy wings,
And plead thy righteousness:

Lord, to thee for help I call,
'Tis thy promise bids me come;
Tell him thou hast paid for all,
And that shall strike him dumb.

LVII. C. *For the Poor.*

1 When Hagar found the bottle spent,
And wept o'er Ishmael;
A message from the Lord was sent
To guide her to a well.*

2 Should not Elijah's cake and cruse†
Convince us at this day,
A gracious God will not refuse
Provisions by the way?

3 His saints and servants shall be fed,
The promise is secure;
"Bread shall be giv'n them," as he said,
"Their water shall be sure."‡

4 Repasts far richer they shall prove,
Than all earth's dainties are;
'Tis sweet to taste a Saviour's love,
Though in the meanest fare.

5 To Jesus then your trouble bring,
Nor murmur at your lot;
While you are poor, and he is King,
You shall not be forgot.

* Gen. xxi. 19. † 1 Kings, xvii. 14. ‡ Isa. xxxiii. 16.

LVIII. *Home in View.*

1 As when the weary trav'ller gains
The height of some o'er-looking hill,
His heart revives, if cross the plains
He eyes his home, though distant still.

2 While he surveys the much-lov'd spot,
He slights the space that lies between;
His past fatigues are now forgot,
Because his journey's end is seen.

3 Thus, when the Christian pilgrim views,
By faith, his mansion in the skies,
The sight his fainting strength renews,
And wings his speed to reach the prize:

4 The thought of home his spirit cheers,
No more he grieves for troubles past;
Nor any future trial fears,
So he may safe arrive at last.*

5 'Tis there, he says, I am to dwell
With Jesus, in the realms of day;
Then I shall bid my cares farewell,
And he will wipe my tears away.

6 Jesus, on thee our hope depends,
To lead us on to thine abode:
Assur'd our home will make amends
For all our toil while on the road.

SIMILAR HYMNS.

Book I. Hymns 4, 7, 9, 11, 25, 35, 36, 39, 41, 46, 47, 48, 70, 95, 128, 132.

Book II. Hymns 45, 46, 47.

* Acts, xx. 24.

V. DEDICATION AND SURRENDER.

LIX. *Old Things are passed away.*

1 Let worldly minds the world pursue,
It has no charms for me;
Once I admir'd its trifles too,
But grace has set me free.

2 Its pleasures now no longer please,
No more content afford;
Far from my heart be joys like these,
Now I have seen the Lord.

3 As by the light of op'ning day
The stars are all conceal'd;
So earthly pleasures fade away,
When Jesus is reveal'd.

4 Creatures no more divide my choice,
I bid them all depart;
His name, and love, and gracious voice,
Have fix'd my roving heart.

5 Now, Lord, I would be thine alone,
And wholly live to thee;
But may I hope that thou wilt own
A worthless worm like me?

6 Yes! though of sinners I'm the worst,
I cannot doubt thy will;
For if thou hadst not lov'd me first,
I had refus'd thee still.*

* Jer. xxxi. 3.

LX. *The Power of Grace.*

1 Happy the birth where grace presides
To form the future life!
In wisdom's paths the soul she guides,
Remote from noise and strife.

2 Since I have known the Saviour's name,
And what for me he bore;
No more I toil for empty fame,
I thirst for gold no more.

3 Plac'd by his hand in this retreat,
I make his love my theme;
And see that all the world calls great
Is but a waking dream.

4 Since he has rank'd my worthless name
Amongst his favour'd few;
Let the mad world who scoff at them,
Revile and hate me too.

5 O thou whose voice the dead can raise,
And soften hearts of stone,
And teach the dumb to sing thy praise,
This work is all thine own.

6 Thy wond'ring saints rejoice to see
A wretch like me restor'd;
And point, and say, "How chang'd is he,
"Who once defy'd the Lord!"

7 Grace bid me live, and taught my tongue
To aim at notes divine;
And grace accepts my feeble song,
The glory, Lord, be thine!

LXI. C. *My Soul thirsteth for God.*

1 I THIRST, but not as once I did,
The vain delights of earth to share;
Thy wounds, Immanuel, all forbid
That I should seek my pleasures there.

2 It was the sight of thy dear cross,
First wean'd my soul from earthly things;
And taught me to esteem as dross
The mirth of fools and pomp of kings.

3 I want that grace that springs from thee,
That quickens all things where it flows,
And makes a wretched thorn, like me,
Bloom as the myrtle, or the rose.

4 Dear Fountain of delight unknown!
No longer sink below the brim;
But overflow, and pour me down
A living, and life-giving stream!

5 For sure, of all the plants that share
The notice of thy Father's eye,
None proves less grateful to his care,
Or yields him meaner fruit than I.

LXII. C. *Love constraining to Obedience.*

1 No strength of nature can suffice
To serve the Lord aright;
And what she has, she misapplies,
For want of clearer light.

2 How long beneath the law I lay
In bondage and distress!
I toil'd the precept to obey,
But toil'd without success.

3 Then to abstain from outward sin
Was more than I could do;
Now, if I feel its pow'r within,
I feel I hate it too.

4 Then all my servile works were done
A righteousness to raise:
Now, freely chosen in the Son,
I freely choose his ways.

5 "What shall I do," was then the word,
"That I may worthier grow?"
"What shall I render to the Lord?"
Is my inquiry now.

6 To see the law by Christ fulfill'd,
And hear his pard'ning voice,
Changes a slave into a child,
And duty into choice.*

LXIII. C. *The Heart healed and changed by Mercy.*

1 Sin enslav'd me many years,
And led me bound and blind;
Till at length a thousand fears
Came swarming o'er my mind.
"Where," I said, in deep distress,
"Will these sinful pleasures end?
"How shall I secure my peace,
"And make the Lord my friend?"

2 Friends and ministers said much
The Gospel to enforce;
But my blindness still was such,
I chose a legal course:

* Rom. iii. 31.

Much I fasted, watch'd, and strove,
Scarce would show my face abroad,
Fear'd, almost, to speak or move,
A stranger still to God.

3 Thus afraid to trust his grace,
Long time did I rebel;
Till, despairing of my case,
Down at his feet I fell:
Then my stubborn heart he broke,
And subdu'd me to his sway,
By a simple word he spoke,
"Thy sins are done away."

LXIV. C. *Hatred of Sin.*

1 Holy Lord God! I love thy truth,
Nor dare thy least commandment slight;
Yet pierc'd by sin, the serpent's tooth,
I mourn the anguish of the bite.

2 But though the poison lurks within,
Hope bids me still with patience wait;
Till death shall set me free from sin,
Free from the only thing I hate.

3 Had I a throne above the rest,
Where angels and archangels dwell;
One sin, unslain, within my breast,
Would make that heav'n as dark as hell.

4 The pris'ner, sent to breathe fresh air,
And bless'd with liberty again,
Would mourn, were he condemn'd to wear
One link of all his former chain.

5 But, oh! no foe invades the bliss,
When glory crowns the Christian's head;
One view of Jesus as he is,
Will strike all sin for-ever dead.

LXV. *The Child.**

1 QUIET, Lord, my froward heart,
Make me teachable and mild,
Upright, simple, free from art,
Make me as a weaned child:
From distrust and envy free,
Pleas'd with all that pleases thee.

2 What thou shalt to-day provide,
Let me as a child receive;
What to-morrow may betide,
Calmly to thy wisdom leave:
'Tis enough that thou wilt care,
Why should I the burden bear?

3 As a little child relies
On a care beyond his own;
Knows he's neither strong nor wise;
Fears to stir a step alone:
Let me thus with thee abide,
As my Father, Guard, and Guide.

4 Thus preserv'd from Satan's wiles,
Safe from dangers, free from fears,
May I live upon thy smiles,
Till the promis'd hour appears,
When the sons of God shall prove
All their Father's boundless love.

* Psal. cxxxi. 2. † Matt. xviii. 3, 4.

LXVI. *True Happiness.*

1 Fix my heart and eyes on thine!
What are other objects worth?
But to see thy glory shine,
Is a heav'n begun on earth:
Trifles can no longer move,
Oh! I tread on all beside,
When I feel my Saviour's love,
And remember how he dy'd.

2 Now my search is at an end,
Now my wishes rove no more!
Thus my moments I would spend,
Love, and wonder, and adore:
Jesus, source of excellence!
All thy glorious love reveal!
Kingdoms shall not bribe me hence,
While this happiness I feel.

3 Take my heart, 'tis all thine own,
To thy will my spirit frame;
Thou shalt reign, and thou alone,
Over all I have, or am:
If a foolish thought shall dare
To rebel against thy word,
Slay it, Lord, and do not spare,
Let it feel thy Spirit's sword.

4 Making thus the Lord my choice,
I have nothing more to choose,
But to listen to thy voice,
And my will in thine to lose:

Thus, whatever may betide,
I shall safe and happy be;
Still content and satisfy'd,
Having all, in having thee.

LXVII. *The Happy Debtor.*

1 Ten thousand talents once I ow'd,
And nothing had to pay;
But Jesus freed me from the load,
And wash'd my debt away.

2 Yet since the Lord forgave my sin,
And blotted out my score;
Much more indebted I have been,
Than e'er I was before.

3 My guilt is cancell'd quite, I know,
And satisfaction made;
But the vast debt of love I owe,
Can never be repaid.

4 The love I owe for sin forgiv'n,
For power to believe,
For present peace, and promis'd heav'n,
No angel can conceive.

5 That love of thine, thou sinner's Friend!
Witness thy bleeding heart!
My little all can ne'er extend
To pay a thousandth part.

6 Nay more, the poor returns I make
I first from thee obtain;*
And 'tis of grace, that thou wilt take
Such poor returns again.

* 1 Chron. xxix. 14.

7 'Tis well—it shall my glory be
(Let who will boast their store)
In time and to eternity,
To owe thee more and more.

SIMILAR HYMNS.

Book I. Hymns 27, 50, 70, 93, 122.
Book II. Hymns, 23, 90.

VI. CAUTIONS.

LXVIII. C. *The New Convert.*

1 The new-born child of Gospel grace,
Like some fair tree when summer's nigh,
Beneath Immanuel's shining face,
Lifts up his blooming branch on high.

2 No fears he feels, he sees no foes,
No conflict yet his faith employs,
Nor has he learnt to whom he owes,
The strength and peace his soul enjoys.

3 But sin soon darts its cruel sting,
And comforts sinking day by day;
What seem'd his own, a self-fed spring,
Proves but a brook that glides away.

4 When Gideon arm'd his num'rous host,
The Lord soon made his numbers less;
And said, lest Israel vainly boast,*
"My arm procur'd me this success."

* Judges, vii. 2.

5 Thus will he bring our spirits down,
And draw our ebbing comforts low,
That sav'd by grace, but not our own,
We may not claim the praise we owe.

LXIX. C. *True and false Comforts.*

1 O God, whose favourable eye
The sin-sick soul revives,
Holy and heav'nly is the joy
Thy shining presence gives.

2 Not such as hypocrites suppose,
Who, with a graceless heart,
Taste not of thee, but drink a dose
Prepar'd by Satan's art.

3 Intoxicating joys are theirs,
Who, while they boast their light,
And seem to soar above the stars,
Are plunging into night.

4 Lull'd in a soft and fatal sleep,
They sin, and yet rejoice;
Were they indeed the Saviour's sheep,
Would they not hear his voice?

5 Be mine the comforts that reclaim
The soul from Satan's pow'r;
That make me blush for what I am,
And hate my sin the more.

6 'Tis joy enough, my All in All,
At thy dear feet to lie;
Thou wilt not let me lower fall,
And none can higher fly.

LXX. *True and false Zeal.*

1 Zeal is that pure and heav'nly flame
The fire of love supplies;
While that which often bears the name,
Is self in a disguise.

2 True zeal is merciful and mild,
Can pity and forbear;
The false is headstrong, fierce, and wild,
And breathes revenge and war.

3 While zeal for truth the Christian warms,
He knows the worth of peace;
But self contends for names and forms,
Its party to increase.

4 Zeal has attain'd its highest aim,
Its end is satisfy'd,
If sinners love the Saviour's name,
Nor seeks it aught beside.

5 But self, however well employ'd,
Has its own ends in view;
And says, as boasting Jehu cry'd,
"Come, see what I can do." *

6 Self may its poor reward obtain,
And be applauded here;
But zeal the best applause will gain,
When Jesus shall appear.

7 Dear Lord, the idol self dethrone,
And from our hearts remove;
And let no zeal by us be shown,
But that which springs from love.

* 2 Kings, x. 16.

LXXI. C. *A living and a dead Faith.*

1 The Lord receives his highest praise
From humble minds and hearts sincere;
While all the loud professor says
Offends the righteous Judge's ear.

2 To walk as children of the day,
To mark the precepts' holy light,
To wage the warfare, watch and pray,
Show who are pleasing in his sight.

3 Not words alone it cost the Lord,
To purchase pardon for his own;
Nor will a soul, by grace restor'd,
Return the Saviour words alone.

4 With golden bells the priestly vest,
And rich pomegranates border'd round,*
The need of holiness express'd,
And call'd for fruit as well as sound.

5 Easy, indeed, it were to reach
A mansion in the courts above,
If swelling words and fluent speech
Might serve, instead of faith and love!

6 But none shall gain the blissful place,
Or God's unclouded glory see,
Who talks of free and sov'reign grace,
Unless that grace has made him free.

* Exod. xxviii. 33.

LXXII. C. *Abuse of the Gospel.*

1 Too many, Lord, abuse thy grace,
In this licentious day;
And while they boast they see thy face,
They turn their own away.

2 Thy book displays a gracious light
That can the blind restore;
But these are dazzled by the sight,
And blinded still the more.

3 The pardon such presume upon,
They do not beg, but steal;
And when they plead it at thy throne,
Oh! where's the Spirit's seal?

4 Was it for this, ye lawless tribe,
The dear Redeemer bled?
Is this the grace the saints imbibe,
From Christ the living head?

5 Ah, Lord, we know thy chosen few
Are fed with heav'nly fare;
But these, the wretched husks they chew
Proclaim them what they are.

6 The liberty our hearts implore,
Is not to live in sin;
But still to wait at wisdom's door,
Till mercy calls us in.

LXXIII. C. *The narrow Way.*

1 What thousands never knew the road!
What thousands hate it when 'tis known!
None but the chosen tribes of God
Will seek or choose it for their own.

2 A thousand ways in ruin end,
One only leads to joys on high;
By that my willing steps ascend,
Pleas'd with a journey to the sky.

3 No more I ask or hope to find
Delight or happiness below;
Sorrow may well possess the mind
That feeds where thorns and thistles grow.

4 The joy that fades is not for me,
I seek immortal joys above;
There glory without end shall be
The bright reward of faith and love.

5 Cleave to the world, ye sordid worms,
Contented lick your native dust;
But God shall fight with all his storms,
Against the idol of your trust.

LXXIV. C. *Dependance.*

1 To keep the lamp alive,
With oil we fill the bowl;
'Tis water makes the willow thrive,
And grace that feeds the soul.

2 The Lord's unsparing hand
Supplies the living stream;
It is not at our own command,
But still deriv'd from him.

3 Beware of Peter's word,*
Nor confidently say,
"I never will deny thee, Lord,"
But "Grant I never may."

* Matt. xxvi. 33.

4 Man's wisdom is to seek
His strength in God alone;
And e'en an angel would be weak,
Who trusted in his own.

5 Retreat beneath his wings,
And in his grace confide;
This more exalts the King of kings
Than all your works beside.*

6 In Jesus is our store,
Grace issues from his throne;
Whoever says, "I want no more,"
Confesses he has none.

LXXV. C. *Not of Works.*

1 Grace, triumphant in the throne,
Scorns a rival, reigns alone!
Come, and bow beneath her sway,
Cast your idol works away.
Works of man, when made his plea,
Never shall accepted be;
Fruits of pride (vain-glorious worm!)
Are the best he can perform.

2 Self, the god his soul adores,
Influences all his pow'rs;
Jesus is a slighted name,
Self-advancement all his aim.
But when God the Judge shall come,
To pronounce the final doom,
Then for rocks and hills to hide
All his works and all his pride!

* John, vi. 29.

3 Still the boasting heart replies,
What ! the worthy and the wise,
Friends to temperance and peace,
Have not these a righteousness ?
Banish ev'ry vain pretence
Built on human excellence ;
Perish ev'ry thing in man,
But the grace that never can.

LXXVI. *Sin's Deceit.*

1 Sin, when view'd by Scripture light,
Is a horrid, hateful sight ;
But when seen in Satan's glass,
Then it wears a pleasing face.

2 When the Gospel trumpet sounds,
When I think how grace abounds,
When I feel sweet peace within,
Then I'd rather die than sin.

3 When the cross I view by faith,
Sin is madness, poison, death ;
Tempt me not, 'tis all in vain,
Sure I ne'er can yield again.

4 Satan, for a while debarr'd,
When he finds me off my guard,
Puts his glass before my eyes,
Quickly other thoughts arise.

5 What before excited fears,
Rather pleasing now appears ;
If a sin, it seems so small,
Or, perhaps, no sin at all.

6 Often thus, through sin's deceit,
Grief, and shame, and loss I meet;
Like a fish, my soul mistook,
Saw the bait, but not the hook.

7 O my Lord, what shall I say?
How can I presume to pray?
Not a word have I to plead,
Sins like mine are black indeed!

8 Made, by past experience, wise,
Let me learn thy word to prize;
Taught by what I've felt before,
Let me Satan's glass abhor.

LXXVII. *Are there few that shall be saved?*

1 Destruction's dang'rous road
What multitudes pursue!
While that which leads the soul to God,
Is known or sought by few.

2 Believers enter in
By Christ, the living gate;
But they who will not leave their sin,
Complain it is too strait.

3 If self must be deny'd,
And sin forsaken quite;
They rather choose the way that's wide,
And strive to think it right.

4 Encompass'd by a throng,
On numbers they depend;
So many surely can't be wrong,
And miss a happy end.

5 But numbers are no mark
That men will right be found;
A few were sav'd in Noah's ark,*
For many millions drown'd.

6 Obey the Gospel call,
And enter while you may;
The flock of Christ is always small,†
And none are safe but they.

7 Lord, open sinners' eyes,
Their awful state to see;
And make them, ere the storm arise,
To thee for safety flee.

LXXVI$_{II.}$ *The Sluggard.*

1 The wishes that the sluggard frames,‡
Of course must fruitless prove;
With folded arms he stands and dreams,
But has no heart to move.

2 His field from others may be known,
The fence is broken through;
The ground with weeds is overgrown,
And no good crop in view.

3 No hardship he, or toil, can bear,
No difficulty meet;
He wastes his hours at home, for fear
Of lions in the street.

* 1 Pet. iii. 20. † Luke, xii. 32.
‡ Prov. vi. 10. and xxiv. 30. and xxii. 13. and xx. 4.

4 What wonder, then, if sloth and sleep
Distress and famine bring!
Can he in harvest hope to reap,
Who will not sow in spring?

5 'Tis often thus, in soul concerns,
We Gospel-sluggards see;
Who, if a wish would serve their turns,
Might true believers be.

6 But when the preacher bids them watch,
And seek, and strive, and pray;*
At ev'ry poor excuse they catch,
"A lion in the way!"

7 To use the means of grace, how loth!
We call them still in vain:
They yield to their beloved sloth,
And fold their arms again.

8 Dear Saviour, let thy pow'r appear,
The outward call to aid;
These drowsy souls can only hear
The voice that wakes the dead.

LXXIX. *Not in Word, but in Power.*

1 How soon the Saviour's gracious call
Disarm'd the rage of bloody Saul,†
Jesus, the knowledge of thy name,
Changes the lion to a lamb!

2 Zaccheus, when he knew the Lord,
What he had gain'd by wrong, restor'd;
And of the wealth he priz'd before,
He gave the half to feed the poor.‡

* 1 Cor. ix. 24. Luke, xiii. 24. † Acts, ix. 6.
‡ Luke, xix. 8.

3 The woman who so vile had been,*
When brought to weep o'er pardon'd sin,
Was from her evil ways estrang'd
And show'd that grace her heart had chang'd.

4 And can we think the pow'r of grace
Is lost, by change of time and place?
Then it was mighty, all allow,
And is it but a notion now?

5 Can they whom pride and passion sway,
Who Mammon and the world obey,
In envy or contention live,
Presume that they indeed believe?

6 True faith unites to Christ the root,
By him producing holy fruit;
And they who no such fruit can show,
Still on the stock of nature grow.

7 Lord, let thy word effectual prove,
To work in us obedient love!
And may each one who hears it dread
A name to live, and yet be dead.†

SIMILAR HYMNS.

Book I. Hymns 8, 20, 85, 87, 91, 104, 125, 139, 141.

Book II. Hymns 34, 49, 86, 91, 99.

* Luke, vii. 47. † Rev. iii. 1.

VII. PRAISE.

LXXX. C. *Praise for Faith.*

1 Of all the gifts thine hand bestows,
Thou Giver of all good!
Not heav'n itself a richer knows,
Than my Redeemer's blood.

2 Faith too, the blood-receiving grace,
From the same hand we gain;
Else, sweetly as it suits our case,
That gift had been in vain.

3 Till thou thy teaching pow'r apply,
Our hearts refuse to see,
And weak, as a distemper'd eye,
Shut out the view of thee.

4 Blind to the merits of thy Son,
What mis'ry we endure!
Yet fly that hand, from which alone
We could expect a cure.

5 We praise thee, and would praise thee more,
To thee our all we owe;
The precious Saviour, and the pow'r
That makes him precious too.

LXXXI. C. *Grace and Providence.*

1 Almighty King! whose wondrous hand
Supports the weight of sea and land;
Whose grace is such a boundless store,
No heart shall break that sighs for more.

2 Thy providence supplies my food,
And 'tis thy blessing makes it good;
My soul is nourish'd by thy word,
Let soul and body praise the Lord.

3 My streams of outward comfort came
From him, who built this earthly frame;
Whate'er I want his bounty gives,
By whom my soul for ever lives.

4 Either his hand preserves from pain,
Or, if I feel it, heals again;
From Satan's malice shields my breast,
Or over-rules it for the best.

5 Forgive the song that falls so low
Beneath the gratitude I owe!
It means thy praise, however poor,
An angel's song can do no more.

LXXXII. *Praise for redeeming Love.*

1 Let us love, and sing, and wonder,
Let us praise the Saviour's name!
He has hush'd the law's loud thunder,
He has quench'd mount Sinai's flame:
He has wash'd us with his blood,
He has brought us nigh to God.

2 Let us love the Lord who bought us,
Pity'd us when enemies,
Call'd us by his grace, and taught us,
Gave us ears, and gave us eyes:
He has wash'd us with his blood,
He presents our souls to God.

3 Let us sing, though fierce temptations
Threaten hard to bear us down!
For the Lord, our strong salvation,
Holds in view the conqu'ror's crown:*
He who wash'd us with his blood,
Soon will bring us home to God.

4 Let us wonder, grace and justice
Join, and point to mercy's store;
When through grace in Christ our trust is,
Justice smiles, and asks no more:
He who wash'd us with his blood,
Has secur'd our way to God.

5 Let us praise and join the chorus
Of the saints enthron'd on high;
Here they trusted him before us,
Now their praises fill the sky;
"Thou hast wash'd us with thy blood,
"Thou art worthy, Lamb of God!"†

6 Hark! the name of Jesus sounded
Loud from golden harps above!
Lord, we blush, and are confounded,
Faint our praises, cold our love!
Wash our souls and songs with blood,
For by thee we come to God.

LXXIII. C. *I will praise the Lord at all Times.*

1 WINTER has a joy for me,
While the Saviour's charms I read,
Lowly, meek, from blemish free,
In the snow-drop's pensive head.

* Rev. ii. 10. † Rev. v. 9.

2 Spring returns, and brings along
Life-invigorating suns:
Hark! the turtle's plaintive song,
Seems to speak his dying groans!

3 Summer has a thousand charms,
All expressive of his worth;
'Tis his sun that lights and warms,
His the air that cools the earth.

4 What, has autumn left to say
Nothing of a Saviour's grace?
Yes, the beams of milder day
Tell me of his smiling face.

5 Light appears with early dawn;
While the sun makes haste to rise,
See his bleeding beauties drawn
On the blushes of the skies.

6 Ev'ning, with a silent pace,
Slowly moving in the west,
Shows an emblem of his grace,
Points to an eternal rest.

LXXXIV. *Perseverance.*

1 Rejoice, believer, in the Lord,
Who makes your cause his own;
The hope that's built upon his word
Can ne'er be overthrown.

2 Though many foes beset your road,
And feeble is your arm;
Your life is hid with Christ in God,*
Beyond the reach of harm.

* Col. iii. 3.

3 Weak as you are, you shall not faint,
Or fainting shall not die;
Jesus, the strength of ev'ry saint,
Will aid you from on high.*

4 Though sometimes unperceiv'd by sense,
Faith sees him always near,
A Guide, a Glory, a Defence,
Then what have you to fear?

5 As surely as he overcame,
And triumph'd once for you;
So surely you, that love his name,
Shall triumph in him too.

LXXXV. *Salvation.*

1 Salvation! what a glorious plan,
How suited to our need!
The grace that raises fallen man
Is wonderful indeed!

2 'Twas wisdom form'd the vast design,
To ransom us when lost;
And love's unfathomable mine
Provided all the cost.

3 Strict justice, with approving look,
The holy cov'nant seal'd;
And truth and power undertook
The whole should be fulfill'd.

4 Truth, wisdom, justice, pow'r, and love,
In all their glory shone,
When Jesus left the courts above,
And dy'd to save his own.

* Isaiah, xl. 29.

5 Truth, wisdom, justice, pow'r, and love,
Are equally display'd,
Now Jesus reigns enthron'd above,
Our Advocate and Head.

6 Now sin appears deserving death,
Most hateful and abhorr'd;
And yet the sinner lives by faith,
And dares approach the Lord.

LXXXVI. *Reigning Grace.*

1 Now may the Lord reveal his face,
And teach our stamm'ring tongues
To make his sov'reign, reigning grace,*
The subject of our songs!
No sweeter subject can invite
A sinner's heart to sing,
Or more display the glorious right
Of our exalted King.

2 This subject fills the starry plains
With wonder, joy, and love;
And furnishes the noblest strains
For all the harps above:
While the redeem'd in praise combine
To grace upon the throne,
Angels in solemn chorus join,
And make the theme their own.†

3 Grace reigns, to pardon crimson sins,
To melt the hardest hearts;
And from the work it once begins
It never more departs.‡

* Rom. v. 21. † Rev. v. 9—12. ‡ Phil. i. 6.

The world and Satan strive in vain
Against the chosen few;
Secur'd by grace's conqu'ring reign,
They all shall conquer too.*

4 Grace tills the soil, and sows the seeds,
'Provides the sun and rain;
Till from the tender blade proceeds
The ripen'd harvest grain.
'Twas grace that call'd our souls at first;
By grace thus far we're come;
And grace will help us through the worst,
And lead us safely home.

5 Lord, when this changing life is past,
If we may see thy face,
How shall we praise and love at last,
And sing the reign of grace!†
Yet let us aim, while here below,
Thy mercy to display;
And own, at least, the debt we owe,
Although we cannot pay.

LXXXVII. *Praise to the Redeemer.*

1 PREPARE a thankful song
To the Redeemer's name!
His praises should employ each tongue,
And ev'ry heart inflame!

2 He laid his glory by,
And dreadful pains endur'd;
That rebels, such as you and I,
From wrath might be secur'd.

* Rom. viii. 3—59. † Psal. cxv. 1.

3 Upon the cross he dy'd,
Our debt of sin to pay;
The blood and water from his side
Wash guilt and filth away.

4 And now he pleading stands,
For us, before the throne,
And answers all the law's demands
With what himself hath done.

5 He sees us, willing slaves
To sin and Satan's pow'r;
But, with an outstretch'd arm, he saves
In his appointed hour.

6 The Holy Ghost he sends,
Our stubborn souls to move,
To make his enemies his friends,
And conquer them by love.

7 The love of sin departs,
The life of grace takes place,
Soon as his voice invites our hearts
To rise and seek his face.

8 The world and Satan rage,
But he their pow'r controls;
His wisdom, love, and truth, engage
Protection for our souls.

9 Though press'd, we will not yield,
But shall prevail at length;
For Jesus is our sun and shield,
Our righteousness and strength.

10 Assur'd that Christ, our King,
Will put our foes to flight,
We on the field of battle sing,
And triumph while we fight.

LXXXVIII. *Man by Nature, Grace, and Glory.*

1 Lord, what is man! extremes how wide,
In this mysterious nature join!
The flesh, to worms and dust ally'd,
The soul, immortal and divine?

2 Divine at first, a holy flame
Kindled by the Almighty's breath;
Till, stain'd by sin, it soon became
The seat of darkness, strife, and death.

3 But Jesus, oh! amazing grace!
Assum'd our nature as his own,
Obey'd and suffer'd in our place,
Then took it with him to his throne.

4 Now what is man, when grace reveals
The virtue of a Saviour's blood!
Again a life divine he feels,
Despises earth, and walks with God.

5 And what in yonder realms above,
Is ransom'd man ordain'd to be?
With honour, holiness, and love,
No seraph more adorn'd than he.

6 Nearest the throne, and first in song,
Man shall his hallelujahs raise;
While wond'ring angels round him throng,
And swell the chorus of his praise.

SIMILAR HYMNS.

Book I. Hymns 57, 58, 59, 79, 80.
Book II. Hymns 37, 38, 39, 41, 42.

VIII. SHORT HYMNS.—BEFORE SERMON.

HYMN LXXXIX.

CONFIRM the hope thy word allows;
Behold us waiting to be fed;
Bless the provisions of thy house,
And satisfy thy poor with bread:
Drawn by thine invitation, Lord,
Athirst and hungry we are come;
Now from the fulness of thy word,
Feast us, and send us thankful home.

HYMN XC.

1 Now, Lord, inspire the preacher's heart,
And teach his tongue to speak;
Food to the hungry soul impart,
And cordials to the weak.

2 Furnish us all with light and pow'rs
To walk in wisdom's ways;
So shall the benefit be ours,
And thou shalt have the praise.

HYMN XCI.

1 THY promise, Lord, and thy command,
Have brought us here to-day;
And now, we humbly waiting stand
To hear what thou wilt say.*

* Psal. lxxxv. 8.

2 Meet us, we pray, with words of peace,
And fill our hearts with love;
That from our follies we may cease,
And henceforth faithful prove.

HYMN XCII.

1 HUNGRY, and faint, and poor,
Behold us, Lord, again
Assembled at thy mercies' door,
Thy bounty to obtain.

2 Thy word invites us nigh,
Or we must starve indeed;
For we no money have to buy,
No righteousness to plead.

3 The food our spirits want
Thy hand alone can give;
Oh, hear the pray'r of faith, and grant
That we may eat and live.

HYMN XCIII.—Psalm cvi. 4, 5.

1 REMEMBER us, we pray thee, Lord,
With those who love thy gracious name;
And to our souls that good afford,
Thy promise has prepar'd for them.

2 To us thy great salvation show,
Give us a taste of love divine;
That we thy people's joy may know,
And in their holy triumph join.

HYMN XCIV.

1 Not to Sinai's dreadful blaze,
But to Zion's throne of grace,
By a way mark'd out with blood,
Sinners now approach to God.*

2 Not to hear the fiery law,
But with humble joy to draw
Water, by that well supply'd,
Jesus open'd when he dy'd.†

3 Lord, there are no streams but thine
Can assuage a thirst like mine;
'Tis a thirst thyself didst give,
Let me therefore drink and live.

HYMN XCV.

1 Often thy public means of grace,
Thy thirsty people's wat'ring place,
The archers have beset; ‡
Attack'd them in thy house of pray'r,
To prison dragg'd, or to the bar,
When thus together met.

2 But we from such assaults are freed,
Can pray, and sing, and hear, and read,
And meet, and part, in peace:
May we our privileges prize,
In their improvement make us wise,
And bless us with increase.

3 Unless thy presence thou afford,
Unless thy blessing clothe the word,

* Hebrews, xii. 18—24. † Isa. xii. 3. ‡ Judges, v. 11.

In vain our liberty!
What would it profit to maintain
A name for life, should we remain
Formal and dead to thee?

AFTER SERMON.

HYMN XCVI.—Deut. xxxiii. 26—29.

1 With Israel's God who can compare?
Or who like Israel happy are?
O people saved by the Lord,
He is thy shield and great reward!

2 Upheld by everlasting arms,
Thou art secur'd from foes and harms;
In vain their plots, and false their boasts,
Our refuge is the Lord of hosts.

HYMN XCVII.—Habakkuk, iii. 17, 18.

Jesus is mine! I'm now prepar'd
To meet with what I thought most hard;
Yes, let the winds of trouble blow,
And comforts melt away like snow:
No blasted trees, or failing crops,
Can hinder my eternal hopes;
Though creatures change, the Lord's the same;
Then let me triumph in his name.

HYMN XCVIII.

We seek a rest beyond the skies,
In everlasting day;
Through floods and flames the passage lies,
But Jesus guards the way:

The swelling flood, and raging flame,
Hear and obey his word;
Then let us triumph in his name,
Our Saviour is the Lord.

HYMN XCIX.—Deut. xxxii. 9, 10.

1 The saints Immanuel's portion are,
Redeem'd by price, reclaim'd by pow'r;
His special choice, and tender care,
Owns them and guards them ev'ry hour.

2 He finds them in a barren land,
Beset with sins, and fears, and foes;
He leads and guides them by his hand,
And bears them safe from all their foes.

HYMN C.—Hebrews, xiii. 20—22.

1 Now may he who from the dead
Brought the Shepherd of the sheep,
Jesus Christ, our King and Head,
All our souls in safety keep!

2 May he teach us to fulfil
What is pleasing in his sight;
Perfect us in all his will,
And preserve us day and night!

3 To that dear Redeemer's praise,
Who the cov'nant seal'd with blood,
Let our hearts and voices raise
Loud thanksgivings to our God.

HYMN CI.—2 Corinthians, xiii. 14.

MAY the grace of Christ our Saviour
And the Father's boundless love,
With the Holy Spirit's favour,
Rest upon us from above!
Thus may we abide in union
With each other, and the Lord;
And possess, in sweet communion,
Joys which earth cannot afford.

HYMN CII.

THE peace which God alone reveals,
And by his word of grace imparts,
Which only the believer feels,
Direct and keep, and cheer your hearts:*
And may the only Three in One,
The Father, Word, and Comforter,
Pour an abundant blessing down
On ev'ry soul assembled here!

HYMN CIII.

1 To thee our wants are known,
From thee are all our pow'rs;
Accept what is thine own,
And pardon what is ours:
Our praises, Lord, and pray'rs receive,
And to thy word a blessing give.

* Phil. iv. 7.

2 Oh, grant that each of us
Now met before thee here,
May meet together thus,
When thou and thine appear!
And follow thee to heav'n our home:
E'en so, Amen, Lord Jesus, come.*

GLORIA PATRI.

HYMN CIV.

1 THE FATHER we adore,
And everlasting SON,
The SPIRIT of his love and pow'r,
The glorious Three in One.

2 At the creation's birth
This song was sung on high,
Shall sound, through ev'ry age, on earth,
And through eternity.

HYMN CV.

1 FATHER of angels and of men,
Saviour, who hast us bought,
Spirit, by whom we're born again,
And sanctify'd and taught!

2 Thy glory, holy Three in One,
Thy people's song shall be,
Long as the wheels of time shall run,
And to eternity.

* Rev. xxii. 20.

HYMN CVI.

1 Glory to God, the Father's name,
To Jesus, who for sinners dy'd;
The Holy Spirit claims the same,
By whom our souls are sanctify'd.

2 Thy praise was sung when time began
By angels, through the starry spheres;
And shall, as now, be sung by man
Through vast eternity's long years.

HYMN CVII.

Ye saints on earth, ascribe, with heav'n's high host,
Glory and honour to the One in Three;
To God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
As was, and is, and evermore shall be.

POEMS.

THE KITE; OR, PRIDE MUST HAVE A FALL.

My waking dreams are best conceal'd,
Much folly, little good they yield;
But now and then I gain, when sleeping,
A friendly hint that's worth the keeping:
Lately I dreamt of one who cry'd,
"Beware of self, beware of pride;
"When you are prone to build a Babel
"Recall to mind this little fable."

ONCE on a time a paper kite
Was mounted to a wondrous height,
Where, giddy with its elevation,
It thus express'd self-admiration:
"See how yon crowds of gazing people
"Admire my flight above the steeple;
"How would they wonder if they knew
"All that a kite like me can do?
"Were I but free, I'd take a flight,
"And pierce the clouds beyond their sight,
"But, ah! like a poor pris'ner bound,
"My string confines me near the ground:
"I'd brave the eagle's tow'ring wing,
"Might I but fly without a string."
It tugg'd and pull'd, while thus it spoke,
To break the string;—at last it broke.
Depriv'd at once of all its stay,
In vain it try'd to soar away;
Unable its own weight to bear,
It flutter'd downward through the air;

Unable its own course to guide,
The winds soon plung'd it in the tide.
Ah! foolish kite, thou hadst no wing,
How couldst thou fly without a string!
My heart reply'd, " O Lord, I see
" How much this kite resembles me!
" Forgetful that by thee I stand,
" Impatient of thy ruling hand;
" How oft I've wish'd to break the lines
" Thy wisdom for my lot assigns!
" How oft indulg'd a vain desire
" For something more, or something high'r!
" And, but for grace and love divine,
" A fall thus dreadful had been mine."

A Thought on the Sea Shore.

1 In ev'ry object here I see
Something, O Lord, that leads to thee.
Firm as the rocks thy promise stands,
Thy mercies countless as the sands,
Thy love a sea immensely wide,
Thy grace an ever-flowing tide.

2 In ev'ry object here I see
Something, my heart, that points at thee.
Hard as the rocks that bound the strand,
Unfruitful as the barren sand,
Deep and deceitful as the ocean,
And, like the tides, in constant motion.

The Spider and Toad.

Some author (no great matter who,
Provided what he says be true)
Relates he saw, with hostile rage,
A spider and a toad engage:

For though with poison both are stor'd,
Each by the other is abhorr'd;
It seems as if their common venom
Provok'd an enmity between 'em.
Implacable, malicious, cruel,
Like modern hero in a duel,
The spider darted on his foe,
Infixing death at ev'ry blow.
The toad, by ready instinct taught,
An antidote, when wounded, sought
From the herb Plantane, growing near,
Well known to toads its virtues rare,
The spider's poison to repel;
It cropp'd the leaf, and soon was well.
This remedy it often try'd,
And all the spider's rage defy'd.
The person who the contest view'd,
While yet the battle doubtful stood,
Remov'd the healing plant away—
And thus the spider gain'd the day:
For when the toad return'd once more
Wounded, as it had done before,
To seek relief, and found it not,
It swell'd and dy'd upon the spot.
In ev'ry circumstance but one
(Could that hold too, I were undone)
No glass can represent my face
More justly than this tale my case.
The toad's an emblem of my heart,
And Satan acts the spider's part.
Envenom'd by his poison, I
Am often at the point to die;
But he who hung upon the tree,
From guilt and woe to set me free,
Is like the Plantane leaf to me.

To him my wounded soul repairs,
He knows my pain, and hears my prayers;
From him I virtue draw by faith,
Which saves me from the jaws of death:
From him fresh life and strength I gain,
And Satan spends his rage in vain.
No secret arts or open force,
Can rob me of this sure resource,
Though banish'd to some distant land,
My med'cine would be still at hand;
Though foolish men its worth deny,
Experience gives them all the lie;
Though Deists and Socinians join,
Jesus still lives, and still is mine.
'Tis here the happy diff'rence lies,
My Saviour reigns above the skies,
Yet to my soul is always near,
For he is God, and ev'ry where.
His blood a sov'reign balm is found
For ev'ry grief, and ev'ry wound;
And sooner all the hills shall flee,
And hide themselves beneath the sea;
Or ocean, starting from its bed,
Rush o'er the cloud-topt mountain's head;
The sun, exhausted of its light,
Become the source of endless night;
And ruin spread from pole to pole;
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Dennett, Printer,
Leather Lane, Holborn.

JUN 13 1941